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MESSIAH'S KINGDOM,

OR,

A BRIEF INQUIRY

CONCERNING WHAT IS REVEALED IN SCRIPTURE,

RELATIVE TO

(**The Fact, the Time, the Signs,**

AND

THE CIRCUMSTANCES

OF)

THE SECOND ADVENT

OF THE

LORD JESUS CHRIST.

By **JOHN BAYFORD, Esq. F.S.A.**

"FEAR GOD, AND GIVE GLORY TO HIM, FOR THE HOUR OF HIS JUDGMENT
IS COME."—*Rev. xiv. 7.*

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Preface.

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To guard against the possible misunderstanding of some of the expressions, which occur in the following pages, it seems desirable to remind the reader, in reference to the prophetical periods spoken of in Scripture, that the leading facts of a particular epoch, are continually placed under one date, and spoken of as one event. The first day on which the rain fell, was the date of the Flood : the day of John the Baptist, was the date of the Gospel Dispensation : and so, when the Author speaks of the day of Messiah's coming, it is not intended to refer to the mere point of time, when He shall first be seen in the clouds of heaven ; but rather to the beginning of those judgments, which may either introduce, or may attend his personal manifestation.

January 1st, 1820.

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Messiah's Kingdom.

CHAP. I.

Introductory Statement.

THE word of truth unfolds to us the kingdom of Messiah under a three-fold state or manifestation.—HE is there revealed as the Creator and Preserver of all things: for it is written, God “created all things by Jesus Christ:” and of the Word who “was in the beginning with God,” and was afterwards “made Flesh,” we read, that “all things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.”—He “in the beginning laid the foundations of the earth; and the heavens are the work of his hands.”—“He upholdeth all things by the word of his power:” and providing for the well-being of his creatures, he rules, ordains, directs, and governs all things in heaven and in earth,

so that the very hairs of our head are numbered, and not a sparrow falls to the ground without him. He is revealed likewise as the God of all grace and consolation : and in this character he governs his spiritual as he does his natural kingdom, by his Power and his Spirit, giving to his people all things needful for life and for godliness, bringing their hearts and consciences into obedience to his will, and by his mighty power keeping them, through faith unto salvation. His spiritual kingdom cometh not with observation, but is established within us ; it is not after the form, or the fashion of this present evil world : no worldly pomp or honor is attached to it : and yet the Lord's people know it, feel it, and comprehend it. But unless a man be born from above, he can neither see nor enter into it, for it is " righteousness, joy, and peace in the Holy Ghost."

There is also another state or manifestation of the power of the Messiah plainly declared in Scripture, but not yet presented to our sight ; and it may be termed his kingdom or government upon earth as Messiah—He proclaims himself to the Apostle John, as " the Prince of the kings of the earth." He has " a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords." He is declared " in all things to have the pre-eminence." He is " the Prince of princes," " whose

name is above every name, that at his name every knee shall bow"—as it is written, "He must reign till he has put all his enemies under his feet." "There shall be given unto him the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession." "His dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth."

In the two first manifestations of Messiah's kingdom, the world at large is left under the power of another prince spoken of in Scripture as "the wicked one;"—"the prince of this world;"—"the spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience;" but a time of the restitution of all things is announced; and when the Lord, even Jesus cometh with ten thousand of his saints to execute judgment, he shall lay "hold on the dragon, that old serpent which is the devil and Satan, and bind him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him that he deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years are fulfilled." The word *nations* proves that during these thousand years, the race of man shall still remain and be continued in the flesh; and other scriptures confirm it, and shew that this period of the thousand years is the time of Messiah's personal reign with his saints; that it is his kingdom,—a reign or rule *upon earth*, which shall be

established in righteousness and true holiness before him.

The Lord Jesus Christ, God over all, blessed for ever, was manifested that he might destroy the works of the devil: and doubtless Satan's power over the mind, the will, the affections, and the flesh of man, is amongst the works to be destroyed. Unless this be accomplished before all flesh shall pass away, how can the Lord be glorified in his Saints? How can it be shewn what manner of persons the Lord's people ought to be, and shall approve themselves in all holiness of life and conversation?—Except during the period when our first parents dwelt in the garden of Eden, and walked before their Lord in peace and in love blameless, the glory and perfection of man in the flesh, or in his time-state, have never been seen in the beauty of their creation. Ever since the fall, the flesh or mundane condition of man has been exhibited only as filthy, hateful to God, odious and defiled by sin, and under the power of the prince of darkness. The ground too, cursed for man's sake, hath brought forth thorns and thistles, and the very air he breathes, conveys to him the seeds of pestilence, disease, and death. The wicked of the earth rule over it, and all the desirable and pleasant things of creation which remain, seem left only to gratify the passions, and to

administer to the vices of the vilest and basest of mankind, who, not content with turning to evil purpose all the good things which have been provided for their use, with perseverance the most insidious, and cruelty the most unrelenting, have continually employed themselves in striving to pervert Jehovah's truth, and to wear out and to destroy the Saints of the Most High God. We might conjecture that our gracious Lord would not allow all flesh to pass away, and to perish under the dominion of the evil one, without bringing forth some better things than are to be seen under a dispensation like the present. "His tender mercies are over all his works," And shall he not at length shew mercy, and deliver man from the power of sin and Satan? Shall not man one day be brought to serve, and to obey his Creator? If revelation were silent, reason might suggest an answer: but blessed be His name, the question is not left for reason: the gracious purpose of the Redeemer is plainly declared in the words of unerring truth; for "the times of the restitution of all things,"—"the times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord," and "the adoption, to wit, the redemption of the body," are spoken of as amongst the blessings prepared for them that love him. In these glorious and happy days "Jerusalem shall be made a rejoicing, and her people a joy: the voice of weeping shall no

more be heard, nor the voice of crying. They shall build houses, and inhabit them, and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth trouble, for they are the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them." "And Jerusalem shall be called a city of truth, and the mountain of the Lord of Hosts, the holy mountain." "The tabernacle of God shall be with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

We learn from the first chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, that immediately before his ascension, the disciples asked our Lord if he would at that time restore again the kingdom to Israel; He replied, it was not for them to know the times or the seasons which the Father had put in his own power; but they "should be his witnesses in Jerusalem, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth:" thereby leading us to conclude, that the kingdom should certainly be again restored to Israel, although the time for it was not then to be revealed. This, like other Scriptures, was written for our instruction; and in these latter days, to which the interpretation of prophecy is promised in an especial manner, it well deserves the attention of the Church. For it is written, "the words are

closed up, and sealed till the time of the end :”
 “ many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased :” “ none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand.” And when shall the wise understand ? At the time of the end, no doubt, for till that time, the words are closed up and sealed ; but then shall they be sealed no longer.

The unparalleled events of the last thirty years, and the signs of the times in which we live, proclaim by no uncertain tokens, that the time of the end cannot be far distant, if it be not at the very doors. The special privilege, therefore, of looking with a steadfast eye to the unfolding of the last mysteries of prophecy, belongs to this period of the Church ; and it becomes a duty, that we should search the Scriptures to understand what is written concerning the glorious promises of the latter day : not for the vain purpose of becoming wise with regard to future events, but to strengthen and confirm our faith, and that of many, that it fail not, and that the Church of Christ, rooted and grounded in faith, and built up in love and in knowledge, may be kept in the hour of temptation, which “ shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth ;” and that the followers of the Lord Jesus being strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might, may be pre-

pared against that time of trouble of which the prophets speak as about to overtake the adversary : " a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation to that same time : "—" an earthquake such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great."

It will be seen by an examination of prophecy, that the judgments of the latter day, as well upon the mystic Babylon, as upon them that know not God, and believe not the gospel of Jesus Christ, are ordained to take place at the same season with the Second Coming of Messiah, with the restoration of Judah to his own land, and with the final deliverance of the Church from the bondage of sin and Satan. It is the opinion of many, that these promises of restoration and deliverance have respect only to spiritual things ; that under the gospel dispensation, the Church is already delivered spiritually from sin and Satan ; that no further deliverance is now to be expected ; and that the several prophecies referred to in support of the opinion here advanced, signify no more than the gathering in of the Jews into the Christian Church, and the gradual extension of that Church over the face of the whole earth, under a state of Church Government, and discipline not unlike that of Apostolic times. It is intended to

combat this opinion, and to shew that times far more abundantly glorious await the Church upon earth, times in which there shall be fulness of joy and pleasures at the Lord's right hand, to endure for evermore, even unto hidden ages. To prove and to illustrate this, not argument, but Scripture will be adduced.

Of the Jews we are told, that "when Moses (the Old Testament Scripture) is read, the veil is on their heart, so that they discern not Jesus of whom Moses spake; but when their heart shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away; and at that time shall Judah and Ephraim be joined together into one stick, and shall become one in the Lord's hand." Nor is God the God of the Jews only, but of the Gentiles also, whom he shall likewise gather with his ancient people. "Then shall there be one fold, and one shepherd." It is from hence deduced that the Jew will be gathered into the millennial Church as a Jew, and the Gentiles as Gentiles, and there shall they be made one, the Jew as the elder brother obtaining the pre-eminence.

Throughout the Scriptures, and especially in the Book of Psalms, a testimony of these things is to be found more or less direct. A kingdom is spoken of, which shall be set up on the earth by the Lord, not

by man, to endure throughout all generations, where-
in his people shall receive their inheritance, and be
set up in judgment. And they shall reign with
Messiah in that kingdom, he giving them to sit with
him in his throne; even as he is set down with his
Father in his throne.

That the beginning of the judgments which shall
usher in these great and important changes, has
already been manifested before the present genera-
tion of men, will be insisted upon by reference to the
signs of the present times: and if so, it behoves us,
according to the Lord's command, to "watch and
pray lest we enter into temptation."

It may be said by many that these are speculative
opinions; but let it be recollected there is a plain
declaration, that He will come in an hour when we
think not. These things are not the less true, because
the attention of men is but little awakened to regard
them; neither are they the more distant because men
perceive not their approach. The time and manner
of these things, whether at hand or afar off, and
under any consideration of them, are of no slight
interest to all of us: but if indeed "the coming of
the Lord draweth nigh;" if "the judge standeth before
the door," the importance of them is increased ten-

fold to all the present dwellers on the earth. To ourselves personally the subject is most momentous. "Behold I come as a thief," says the Apostle, speaking in his Master's name. "Behold he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him, and all the kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him." "But who shall abide the day of his coming, and who shall stand when he appeareth!"

CHAP. II.

Scripture proof that Messiah will reign visibly upon earth—from the Psalms.

It is proposed now to inquire, what the Scriptures in point of fact do reveal to us, regarding the personal coming of Messiah to establish his kingdom upon the earth in the latter day. It seems a general opinion, that at His second coming the heavens and earth shall pass away for ever, the whole race of man become extinct, and both quick and dead be brought immediately before the Great Judge to receive their final doom; and that all the wicked shall then go into everlasting punishment, and the righteous into life eternal. That this statement is not consonant with Scripture, a cursory examination would abundantly testify: but as the investigation before us makes it necessary to enter more largely into the subject, it may be desirable to examine, at the outset, some of those parts of Holy Writ which have immediate reference to it; for unless it should appear from thence that Messiah's second coming is manifestly of such a kind as has been suggested, our inquiry would

rather assume the shape of idle speculation, than of profitable and legitimate research.

It is asserted upon the authority of Scripture now about to be adduced, that the Lord Jesus Christ, our crucified and risen Saviour, will in the latter day appear in person upon the earth a second time, with power and great glory, to set up and to establish his kingdom or government upon the earth, whilst the race of man is still continued in the flesh; and that he, with his risen saints, the spirits of the just made perfect, will for the time appointed, called in Scripture a thousand years, maintain and exercise a visible and glorious rule and government over the children of men upon the earth. It is to this proposition, and to this only, that our immediate attention is to be directed.

The Book of Psalms is first referred to in confirmation of what is thus asserted, for it contains more specific, if not more ample prophecies of the person, the work, the sufferings, and the exaltation of the Lord Jesus our Redeemer, than are to be found elsewhere in Scripture. Messiah, His Church, and His salvation, are the sum, and the substance, the beginning, the middle, and ending of all the Psalms. It will be found, moreover, that about sixty of the

Psalms have a direct reference to the fact of the second coming. To transcribe or to compare so extensive a portion of Scripture would be inconvenient, and therefore a few of those Psalms only which are the most striking will be brought forward.

Psalms x.—Messiah here complains of the prevalence of the evil ones, and is comforted by the promise that His kingdom shall be established. "The Lord is king for ever and ever, the heathen are perished out of his land."

Psalms xxii. represents Messiah crying to the Father in the midst of his deep afflictions; and in answer to his supplication, the glory of the kingdom, which is reserved for him in the latter day is thus described to him. "All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord, and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee,"—"for the kingdom is the Lord's; and he is the governor among the nations; all they that be fat upon the earth shall eat and worship: all they that go down to the dust shall bow before him: and none can keep alive his own soul. A seed shall serve him, it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation: they shall come, and shall declare his righteousness unto a people that shall be born, that he hath done this."

Psalm xxxiii.—The Church is exhorted to praise Jehovah and His Christ, the blessedness of whose kingdom is set forth. “The word of the Lord is right, and all his works are done in truth. He loveth righteousness and judgment : the earth is full of the goodness of the Lord.” “Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord, and the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance.”

Psalm xxxvi.—Messiah’s faithfulness to his people is here principally treated of. “How excellent is thy loving kindness, O God, therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings. They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house.”

Psalm xxxvii.—The Church is comforted by the promise of deliverance from affliction, and by an assurance that the wicked who trouble her shall speedily be destroyed. “Evil doers shall be cut off, but those that wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit the earth. The meek shall inherit the earth, and delight themselves in the abundance of peace.” “The righteous shall inherit the land, and dwell therein for ever.” “Wait on the Lord and keep his way, and he shall exalt thee to inherit the land ; when the wicked are cut off, thou shalt see it.”

Psalm xlv.—The subject of this Psalm is the glorious marriage of the King's Daughter—the Church. It is said to per—"instead of thy fathers shall be thy children, whom thou mayest make princes in all the earth: I will make thy name to be remembered in all generations, therefore shall the people praise thee for ever and ever."

Psalm xlviii.—The glories of Zion in the reign of Messiah her King form the subject of this Psalm. "The Lord Most High is terrible, he is a great King over all the earth; he shall subdue the people under us, and the nations under our feet."—"Sing praises to God, sing praises, sing praises to our King, sing praises. For God is King of all the earth: sing ye praises with understanding; God reigneth over the heathen."

Psalm lxy.—The Church sets forth the praises of Messiah—"O thou that hearest prayer, to thee shall all flesh come"—"Thou visitest the earth, and waterest it, thou greatly enrichest it with the river of God, which is full of water, thou preparest them corn, when thou hast so provided for it."

Psalm lxvi.—The same subject is continued—the praises of the Lord the King (Messiah) for his mer-

ties and loving kindnesses to his people, and for putting down the rebellious who have afflicted them. "All the earth shall worship thee, and shall sing unto thee: they shall sing to thy name. Come and see the works of God, he is terrible in his doings towards the children of men." "He ruleth by his power for ever; his eyes behold the nations; let not the rebellious exalt themselves."

Psalm lxxvii.—The Church calls upon all the nations to praise Messiah. "O let the nations be glad and sing for joy, for thou shalt judge the people righteously, and govern the nations upon earth."—"Then shall the earth yield her increase, and God, even our own God, shall bless us. God shall bless us, and all the ends of the earth shall fear him."

Psalm lxxii.—The Church prays for the establishment of Messiah's Kingdom, the glories of which she then proceeds to describe. "Give the King thy judgments, O God, and thy righteousness unto the King's Son."—"In his days shall the righteous flourish, and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth; he shall have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth."—"All kings shall fall down before him: all nations shall serve"

him."—"His name shall endure for ever: his name shall be continued as long as the sun, and men shall be blessed in him: all nations shall call him blessed."—"Blessed be his glorious name for ever, and let the whole earth be filled with his glory."

Psalm lxxvi.—This Psalm declares the power and the judgments that shall accompany Messiah's Kingdom. "In Judah is God known: his name is great in Israel."—"Thou didst cause judgment to be heard from heaven; the earth feared and was still when God arose to judgment to save the meek of the earth."

Psalm xcvi. declares the glories of Messiah's Kingdom, and calls upon every creature to bless, and to praise him. "O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness, fear before him all the earth; say among the heathen that the Lord reigneth: the world also shall be established that it shall not be moved: he shall judge the people righteously."

Psalm xcvii.—The glorious reign of Messiah is here described. "The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice, let the multitude of the isles be glad thereof."—"The heavens declare his righteousness, and all the people see his glory."

Psalm xcix.—The same subject is continued. "The Lord reigneth: let the people tremble: he sitteth between the cherubim: let the earth be moved. The Lord is great in Zion: and he is high among all the people."

Psalm ci.—Messiah here declares the peace, and righteousness of his kingdom. "I will early destroy all the wicked of the land: that I may cut off all wicked doers from the city of the Lord."

Psalm cii. requires to be particularly noticed. It is written as a dialogue in which Jehovah, in answer to the supplication of Messiah in the flesh, declares to him the glories which await him, when his kingdom shall be established on the earth in the latter day. "Thou Lord shalt endure for ever, and thy remembrance unto all generations: thou shalt arise and have mercy upon Zion, for the time to favour her, yea the set time is come. For thy servants take pleasure in her stones, and favour the dust thereof. So the heathen shall fear the name of the Lord, and all the kings of the earth, thy glory. When the Lord shall build up Zion, he shall appear in his glory; he will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer."—"This shall be written for the generation to come, and the people which shall be created shall

praise the Lord: for he hath looked down from the height of his sanctuary, from heaven did the Lord behold the earth,"—"to declare the name of the Lord in Zion, and his praise in Jerusalem, when the people are gathered together, and the kingdoms to serve the Lord."—"Of old thou hast laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of thy hands; they shall perish, but thou shalt endure, yea all of them shall wax old like a garment: as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed. But thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end; the children of thy servants shall continue, and their seed shall be established before thee."

Psalm cxlv.—The Church sets forth at large the glories of Messiah's reign, and praises him for all his blessings. One passage must suffice. "My mouth shall speak the praise of the Lord; and all flesh shall bless his holy name for ever and ever."

Many other passages from the Psalms might be adduced in exact conformity with those already recited, but further extracts can hardly be thought necessary, and much other Scripture still remains to be examined. The Psalms alone would however be sufficient to warrant the assertion, that in the latter day Messiah will come to establish his kingdom.

and to reign with open and personal glory, making himself governor of the nations, and a great king over the earth; and all the earth shall worship him, and all nations serve him. And then shall the meek and the righteous *inherit the land*, and delight themselves in the abundance of his peace; the wicked also shall be cut off, and the nations shall be subdued under the feet of Messiah, and his people.

CHAP. III.

*Scripture Evidence of Messiah's Reign visibly upon
Earth—from Isaiah.*

The Book of Proverbs stands next in order to the Psalms. It was written by Solomon (the Prince of Peace) an eminent and acknowledged type of Messiah upon the throne of his kingdom. Solomon speaking by the Spirit declares in the commencement of this book, the judgment which shall be executed upon those who have set at nought the counsel of Messiah, and who would have none of his reproof; of whom it is declared, that Messiah in the day of his vengeance shall "laugh at their calamity, and mock when their fear cometh." And this inspired writer, after setting forth the ancient glory of Him who is "The wisdom of God," delivers to his people many precepts for their guidance; every one of which when carefully examined, and accurately understood, will be found replete with gospel truth, chiefly hidden from the sons of men under the veil of moral instruction.

The Book of Ecclesiastes and the Canticles were written by Solomon with reference to Messiah, the

first treating of him as the prophet, and the latter as the bridegroom of his Church: but in no one of these three books does the Kingdom of Messiah appear to be spoken of with much distinctness.

The Book of Isaiah follows next, and in the second chapter we read, "It shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it, and many people shall go and say, Come ye, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob."—"And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people."

In chapter xi. the prophet speaks of Messiah coming forth as a "rod out of the stem of Jesse," as "a branch that shall grow out of his roots." The spirit of the Lord shall rest upon that branch, "and shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord, and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes (*as man,*) neither reprove after the hearing of his ears (*as man,*) but with righteousness (*as Jehovah*) shall he judge the poor, (*i. e.* rule over them) and reprove with equity for (*the sake of*) the meek of the earth." The blessedness of his kingdom is set forth, and it is added

"they shall not hurt, nor destroy in all my holy mountain : for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." To him "shall the Gentiles seek, and his rest shall be glorious."

Chapter xxiv. declares the judgments at Messiah's second coming. V. 18, we read, "the windows from on high are open, and the foundations of the earth do shake. The earth is utterly broken down ; the earth is clean dissolved ; the earth is moved exceedingly ; the earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and the transgression thereof shall be heavy upon it, and it shall fall and not rise again. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall punish the host of the high ones that are on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth."—"Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed; when the Lord of Hosts shall reign in Mount Zion, and before his ancients gloriously." These passages are explained by reference to other Scriptures, and they by no means lead us to suppose that the heavens and earth then shall be *no more*, but that they shall be cleansed or purged by fire. Isaiah lxvi. 22, 23, shews there shall be new heavens and a new earth, in which Messiah and his saints shall reign. "For as the new heavens and the new earth which I will make, shall

remain before me, saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain ; and it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord." 2 Pet. iii. is to the same effect : " The heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also, and the works that are therein shall be burnt up ;"—" nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." So also in Rev. xxi. " And I (John) saw a new heaven and a new earth : for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away, and there was no more sea."—" And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new."

Chapter xxv. contains the praise and thanksgiving of the Church upon the manifestation of Messiah's power and salvation, in the destruction of the wicked, and the deliverance of his people. That his reign over the earth with his saints will then commence, is thus declared : " Thou hast made of a city (Babylon) an heap ; of a defenced city, a ruin." " Therefore shall the strong people glorify thee, the city of the terrible nations shall fear thee."—" And in this mountain (in Zion) shall the Lord of Hosts make

unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined; and he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering (of unbelief) cast over all people, and the veil (of ignorance) that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death in victory,* and the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces, and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from all the earth: for the Lord hath spoken it."

Chapter xxxii. begins — "Behold a king shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment." That this king is Messiah, and consequently the princes his saints, is to be collected from what follows, for he is *wm*, the man, who "shall be as a hiding place from the storm, and a covert from the tempest, as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land." This king rebukes the careless women who are at ease, and commands them to gird them with sackcloth, and he declares that "they shall lament for the pleasant fields, and for the fruitful vine," because the palaces shall be forsaken "until the Spirit be poured upon us from on high."—"Then judgment shall dwell in the

* This is the victory that overcometh, even our faith.—1 John v. 4.

wilderness, and righteousness remain in the fruitful field, and the work of righteousness shall be peace.” —“And my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places, when it shall hail, coming down on the forest.”

Chapter xl. next demands our attention. It opens the promise of comfort to the Church in the latter day. “Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her that her warfare is accomplished,” she is no longer a church militant, having entered into her peaceful rest. “Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain: and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and *all flesh* (men living in the flesh) shall see it together.” This is quoted in the gospels as referring to the first coming: it has also a manifest reference to the second.

Chapter xli. repeats the assurance of the manifestation of the glory of Messiah to all flesh, i. e. *to the inhabitants of the earth*. “Keep silence before me, O islands, and let *the people* renew their strength, let them come near, let them speak: let us come near together to judgment.” —“The isles saw, and feared: the ends of the *earth* drew near, and came.”

Chapter xlii. speaks thus of Messiah's glory. "He shall not fail, nor be discouraged, till he hath set up judgment in the earth; and the isles shall wait for his law." And again: "sing unto the Lord a new song, and his praise from the end of the earth, ye that go down to the sea, and all that is therein; the isles, and the inhabitants thereof. Let the wilderness and the cities thereof lift up their voice, the villages that Kedar doth inhabit: let the inhabitants of the rock sing, let them shout from the top of the mountains. Let them give glory unto the Lord, and declare his praise in the islands."

Chapter xliii.—Messiah proclaims himself the king of his people. The term *people* could hardly be used, if men in the flesh were then no longer in existence. "For your sakes I have sent to Babylon, and have brought down all their nobles, and the Chaldeans, whose cry is in their ships. I the Lord, your Holy One, the Creator of Israel, your king."—"This people have I formed for myself, they shall shew forth my praise."

Chapter xlix.—Messiah's promise here seems necessarily to imply the continuance of the Church in a habitation upon the earth. "Sing, O heavens, and be joyful, O earth: and break forth into singing, O mountains, for the Lord hath comforted his people,

and will have mercy on his afflicted.”—“The children which thou shalt have, shall say again in thine ears, the place is too strait for me, give place to me that I may dwell.” The whole context shews the time spoken of to be the time of the millennial Church.


Chapter li.—Corresponding passages are to be found in this chapter. “I have put my words in thy mouth, and I have covered thee in the shadow of mine hand, that I may plant the heavens, and lay the foundations of the earth, and say unto Zion, thou art my people.” The heavens and earth here spoken of are the new heavens and new earth mentioned in Isaiah xxv. and lxvi. 2 Pet. iii. and Rev. xxi. already referred to.

Chapter lx.—Messiah here calls to the Church to rise and shine, for her light is come, and the glory of the Lord shall be seen upon her. He adds, “and the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising.”—“The nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish, yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted”—“they shall call thee, the city of the Lord—the Zion of the Holy One of Israel”—“I will make thee an external excellency, a joy of many generations.”—“Thy people also shall be all righteous, they shall inherit *the land* for ever.”—“A little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a

strong nation." What is this, but an increase of the Church upon the earth?

Chapter lxii.—The watchmen who are set upon the walls of Jerusalem are commanded never to hold their peace day nor night, and to give the Lord no rest till he establish, till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth; and in chap. lxvi. after declaring the fulfilment of this prayer, it is added: "I will gather *all nations* and tongues, and they shall come and see my glory:"—that is, they shall see the glory of the Lord which he shall set upon Zion, when she shall be called (as in Chapter lxii.) "sought out, a city not forsaken."

The prophecy of Isaiah abounds with passages corresponding with these recitals, and surely mankind cannot pass away, without a manifestation of Messiah's glory, in bringing the flesh of man to serve him in his kingdom upon the earth. That under such a dispensation, sin and sorrow being totally removed, and Satan the tempter bound, the joy of the Church will be most abundant, and her rest most glorious, the foregoing Scriptures would demonstrate if they stood alone: but as the other prophets, and the apostles also bear witness of these things, it may be well to adduce the further corroboration of their testimony.



CHAP. IV.

*Scripture proof of Messiah's Reign upon the Earth—
from Jeremiah and the other Prophets.*

The prophet Jeremiah comes next to be considered in reference to the testimony, which he affords of Messiah's second coming, to reign personally with his saints upon the earth. The transgression of Jerusalem and Judah, (the Jewish Church and people) the judgments upon them on account of their iniquities, the gathering of them in the latter days, and the judgments then to be poured out upon the nations that have afflicted them, form the principal subjects upon which Jeremiah writes. Israel also with Judah shall be gathered together, and at the same season, as appears by chapters xxx. and xxxi. and "They shall serve the Lord their God, and David their King, whom I will raise up to them," saith the Lord. "Out of them shall proceed thanksgiving, and the voice of them that make merry: I will multiply them, and they shall not be few; I will also glorify them, and and they shall not be small; their children also shall be as aforetime, and their congregation shall be established before me, and I will punish all that

oppress them.”—“There shall dwell in Judah itself, and in all the cities thereof together, husbandmen, and they that go forth with flocks.”—“Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will sow the house of Israel, and the house of Judah, with the seed of man, and with the seed of beast : and it shall come to pass, that like as I have watched over them to pluck up, and to break down, and to throw down, and to destroy, and to afflict ; so will I watch over them to build and to plant, saith the Lord.”

The prophet Ezekiel in the first twenty-four chapters declares the transgressions of Israel and Judah, and the judgments upon them from the Lord ; and from thence to chapter xxxv. inclusively, he treats of the Lord's judgments upon the several nations which have oppressed his people. Chapters xxxvi. and xxxvii. set forth the restoring of Judah and Ephraim, chapters xxxviii. and xxxix. the gathering together of Gog and Magog, to fight against the mountains of Israel, and the consequent destruction of Gog and Magog ; and from thence to the end, the prophet describes the latter-day temple, with its several parts, the waters of grace that flow from it, and the allotment or division of the land of inheritance amongst the tribes of Israel. Throughout Ezekiel, passages are to be found to support what has been advanced of

Messiah's personal reign upon the earth, and over the race of man still continued in the flesh. One or two examples must suffice.—Chapter, xxxiv. “I will save my flock, and they shall be no more a prey.” —“And I will set up one Shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David; he shall feed them, and he shall be their Shepherd, and I the Lord will be their God, and my servant David a prince among them.”—“And I will make them and the places round about my hill a blessing.”—“And they shall be no more a prey to the heathen.”—“But they shall dwell safely, and none shall make them afraid.”—“Thus shall they know that I the Lord their God am with them, and that they, even the house of Israel, are my people, saith the Lord God, and ye *my flock*, the flock of my pasture *are men*, and I am your God, saith the Lord God.”—Chapter xxxv. contains the judgment of Mount Seir, and it is said “when the whole earth rejoiceth, I will make thee desolate.” Various passages might be adduced from the two following chapters: these are selected—“I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land, and I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel.” —“And David my servant shall be king over them; and they shall all have one Shepherd.”—“And they

shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt, and they shall dwell therein, even they and their children, and their childrens' children for ever, and my servant David shall be their prince for ever."—"And I will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore."
—"My tabernacle also shall be with them: yea, I will be their God, and they shall be my people, and the heathen shall know that I the Lord do sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore."

The latter chapters of Ezekiel which describe the temple and the apportioning of the inheritance, speak so plainly of Messiah's personal reign, as prince in the midst of his people, that the words can hardly admit of any other interpretation, and if other Scriptures did not make it manifest, that during this reign nations and people would be continued in the flesh, these chapters alone would be sufficient to establish the point. To trace the several passages would extend these quotations to an inconvenient length, the reader is requested, therefore, to examine the chapters for himself. He will find the Lord declares:—"the place of my throne, and the place of the soles of my feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel for ever, and my holy name, shall the house of

Israel no more defile; neither they, nor their kings by their whoredom, nor by the carcases of their kings in their high places."—"Now let them put away their whoredom, and the carcases of their kings, far from me; and I will dwell in the midst of them for ever."—

"Then said the Lord to me; this gate shall be shut, it shall not be opened, and no man shall enter in by it; because the Lord the God of Israel hath entered in by it, therefore it shall be shut.—It is for the Prince, &c."—"Ye shall divide it (the land) by lot for an inheritance unto you, and to the strangers that sojourn among you: which shall beget children among you: and they shall be unto you as born in the country, among the children of Israel: they shall have inheritance with you among the tribes of Israel."

It will be necessary to consider the prophecies of Daniel more at large in a subsequent part of this inquiry, and for the present it is enough to point out the few passages following, as illustrative of the point under consideration:—"In the days of these kings (the ten kingdoms into which the Roman empire resolves itself) the God of heaven shall set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed."—"And the kingdom shall not be left to other people; (people, strangers to God's covenant) but it shall break in pieces, and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall

stand for ever." Dan. ii. 44.—"Behold one like the Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven,"—"and there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him."—"The kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him." Dan. vii. The last chapter declares this shall be when Michael the great Prince standeth up for his people : and the prophet is comforted with the assurance, that when this period arrives, he, Daniel, "shall stand in his lot."

The prophet Hosea declares, "the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim. Afterwards shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their king, and shall fear the Lord, and his goodness in the latter days." Hos. iii. 4, 5.

Joel says, "The Lord shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem, and the heavens and the earth shall shake, but the Lord will be the hope of

his people, and the strength of the children of Israel : so shall ye know that I am the Lord your God dwelling in Zion, my holy mountain : then shall Jerusalem be holy, and there shall no strangers pass through her any more."—"But Judah shall dwell for ever, and Jerusalem from generation to generation ; and I will cleanse their blood that I have not cleansed : for the Lord dwelleth in Zion." Joel iii.

It is time we should now proceed to the examination of the New Testament Scriptures : and therefore the abundant testimony of Amos, of Obadiah, of Micah, of Nahum, of Habakkuk, of Zephaniah, of Haggai, of Zechariah, and of Malachi, must be passed over, with a request to the reader, that he will search and examine these prophecies for himself :—he will find in them plain and decisive testimony upon the point before us, and it seems necessary only to remind him, that Zech. xiv. declares that the feet of the Lord shall stand upon the Mount of Olives in that day ; and Malachi iii.—that the Lord, the angel of the covenant, shall come suddenly to his temple, and sit there as a refiner's fire.

CHAP. V.

Proof of Messiah's Reign upon Earth—from the Apostles.

The glorious advent of Messiah, as declared by the writers of the Old Testament, was understood so clearly by the Jewish Church, that his prior advent in humility seems almost entirely to have been lost sight of. The first Christians searching the Old Testament Scriptures, had clear, and most consolatory views of this blessed truth; and in the books of the New Testament, it is rather referred to as a thing before revealed by the prophets, and well known to all, than as a matter to which it was necessary then to call the attention of the Church. The second advent therefore is not spoken of in the New Testament under the highly wrought images of the prophets, but in short and plain declarations of the fact, and in words so unequivocal as hardly to leave room for a doubt, as a brief examination will demonstrate.

Matthew xvi. records a conversation between our Lord and his disciples, in which he rebuked Peter for being offended at the idea of his Master's suffering,

and in the close of it he adds, "The Son of Man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels, and then shall he reward every man according to his works: Verily I say unto you, there be some standing here, which shall not taste of death till they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom," and this was literally fulfilled in the persons of three then present, Peter, James, and John, who witnessed our Lord's transfiguration six days afterwards on the mountain. Mark ix. and Luke ix. give this passage in a similar context.

Chapter xix. 28, contains the promise to the twelve apostles, "that when the Son of Man shall sit on the throne of his glory, they also shall sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." Chap. xxv. 31, describes Messiah sitting as king in his glory, "upon the throne of his glory;" and that this does not refer to the *last* judgment, will be seen in the sequel.—Chap. xxvi. 64. Christ having remained silent under the accusation of the false witnesses before the Jewish council, the high priest, "adjured him by the living God, to tell them whether he were the Christ, the Son of God." To this our Lord replied in the affirmative, and as if he intended to intimate to the high priest and to his associates, the dreadful reckoning that awaited them for their deeds

upon that day, he added :—" Nevertheless, I say unto you, that hereafter ye shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." The gospels of Mark and Luke also record this interesting circumstance. Mark xiv. 62. Luke xxii. 69.

Luke xvii. The Pharisees having asked our Lord when the kingdom of God should come, he takes occasion afterwards to inform his disciples, that " as the lightning that lightneth out of one part under heaven, shineth unto another part under heaven ; so shall also the Son of Man be in his day."—Chap. xxii. After the last supper there was a contention amongst the disciples, which of them should be accounted greatest :—Christ reminds them, that though chief, he was himself amongst them as one that served : and adds, " Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations : and I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me ; that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." A promise to the same effect, but given upon another occasion, has been already noticed in Matt. xix. and it can hardly, without distorting the obvious meaning of plain words, be contended, that these promises do not relate to a kingdom which is to be established

on the earth, whilst the race of man is continued in the flesh.

John i. 51.—It is here mentioned, that upon Nathaniel acknowledging Jesus to be the Christ, he told him:—"Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man."

Acts i. 11.—The testimony of the angels to the apostles who witnessed the ascension of our Lord, is very striking. "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner, as ye have seen him go into heaven."—Zechariah xiv. already noticed, illustrates this passage, shewing that He will descend upon the Mount of Olives. Acts iii.—Here we remark the address of Peter to the Jews, who wondered at the cure wrought upon the impotent man. He tells them that Jesus through faith in his name had made the man sound, and that when the times of refreshing should come from the presence of the Lord, He would send Jesus Christ, whom the heavens must receive until the times of the restitution of all things.

1 Cor. i. 7.—Paul renders thanks for the grace given

to the Church at Corinth, "So that they came behind in no gift, waiting for the coming of the Lord Jesus."—Chap. iv. 7, he exhorts them to "judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who will bring to light the hidden things of darkness."—Chap. xi. 26, speaking of the Lord's Supper, he says, "As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come."—Chap. xv. 25, "He (Christ) must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet."

Philip. i. 10. The apostle prays that they may be sincere, and without offence till the day of Christ.—Chap. iii. 20, 21. "For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for our Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ."

1 Thessalonians iii. 13. He prays they may increase and abound in love, "to the end their hearts may be established unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, with all his saints."—Chap. iv. 16. "The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the arch-angel, and with the trump of God."

2 Thess. i. 8. "The Lord Jesus Christ shall be

revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ."

1 Timothy vi. 14. The apostle charges Timothy to "keep this commandment (which had been delivered to him) without spot and unrebukable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ."

2 Timothy iv. 1. "I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing, and his kingdom, preach the word, &c."

Hebrews ix. 28, "Unto them that look for him shall Christ appear the second time without sin unto salvation."

James v. 8. This apostle also testifies of the second coming of Messiah as follows: "Be ye also patient, stablish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh."

1 Peter v.—Peter exhorts the elders to feed the flock of Christ, &c. adding, "And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of

glory that fadeth not away." In his second epistle he details several particulars of the second coming of Messiah, and says, Chap. iii. 10. "The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night."

Jude v. 14. records a prophecy delivered by Enoch the Seventh from Adam, "saying, behold the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them, of all their ungodly deeds," &c.

Lastly, John, the disciple whom Jesus loved, in his first epistle, says, Chap. iii. 2. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is."—The Book of Revelations delivered to this apostle, completes the canon of Scripture: and it contains the history of the Church in a minute series of prophecy extending down to the full establishment of Messiah's Kingdom, and mentioning incidentally the great and final judgment, when heaven and earth shall be no more. Rev. xx. 11. The contents of this book must be left for future consideration, but the quotations adduced in illustration of the point contended for, may be well closed with the following passage from Rev. xxi. "The nations of them that

are saved shall walk in the light of the new Jerusalem; and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it; and the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there. And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it."

The great and important truths declared in the Scriptures which have been adduced, in proof of Messiah's reign upon the earth, have been a source of consolation to the Church of Christ in ages past. Many have seen these things, have been persuaded of them, have rested in them, and have rejoiced. To the inquiry, when shall these things be, it has ever been answered, it is "a land very far off;" and though from time to time some few may have been led to hope for the near approach of these glories, yet the systematic searching of the Scriptures to know "what and what manner of time the Spirit doth signify," has been confined to very few. When our Lord came in the flesh, "who believed the report?" "He came to his own, and his own received him not." The Jews, looking for a manifestation widely different from that which presented itself before them, turned away from, and despised, the "man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief." When they looked for a conqueror to deliver their nation from the Roman

yoke, there came the Lamb prepared from the foundation of the world, as an offering for sin, and a sacrifice of a sweet-smelling savour. There came not the glorious Messiah travelling in the greatness of his strength, but the meek and lowly Jesus to bear our sins in his own body on the tree, ordained to be made "perfect through sufferings," and by his own "death to destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil." And what is revealed to us of the existing state of things at the time of the second advent? The virgins, both wise and foolish, shall be all slumbering and sleeping: there shall be "an hour of temptation which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth." What this temptation shall be, another Scripture may explain: "when the Son of Man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" Shall any be found watching, waiting, praying for, and expecting the great and glorious coming of Messiah to shake terribly the earth, and to deliver "the children of the kingdom?" But "yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry,"—"whether they will hear; or whether they will forbear." He hath said, and it shall come to pass, he is Jehovah, and he will do his pleasure.

CHAP. VI.

Promise to the Seed of Abraham.

When Messiah comes to reign in the latter day, all other rule and all other authority must be put down throughout the earth. Two great events are spoken of in prophecy as connected with his coming, viz : the gathering in and restoring of his ancient people, the seed of Abraham, and the destruction of the great idolatrous power, which has persecuted the gospel Church from the beginning. That these two events depend upon, and are brought to pass by Messiah's second advent, is the point which comes next to be considered.

And first as to the fact of the restoration of this ancient people.—It is the opinion of many of the present day, that the prophecies which are supposed to announce this event, do not apply to Israel, or Jacob, or Judah, or Ephraim in the flesh, but to their spiritual seed, which shall be gathered into the Church above, that is, into the Church to be established, not upon the earth, but in the heavens above, in a new dispensation of things, after the

present heavens and earth shall have passed away : whilst others consider the fulfilment to be already manifested in the Gospel Church, uniting Jew and Gentile into one, through Christ, who has broken down the middle wall of partition between them.

The Lord made this promise to Abraham, (Gen. xiii.) that he would give him all the land of Canaan, "unto him and to his seed for ever," and that he would "make his seed as the dust of the earth for number :"—The promise is repeated, Gen. xvii. in these comprehensive words : "I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee in their generations, for an everlasting covenant to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession, and I will be their God." And again, after Abraham had obeyed the voice of the Lord in offering up his son Isaac, the child of the promise, the angel of the Lord said to him, Gen. xxii. "In blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore, and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies ; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because thou hast obeyed my voice."

The land of Canaan was first peopled by ten nations, the descendants of the ten sons of Canaan, son of Ham, whom he had besides Sidon his first born: and at the time when the children of Israel were brought into Canaan under Joshua, these nations, through intermixture, diminution, or otherwise, had been reduced to seven, (Deut. i. 7,) and they were wasted and destroyed before the armies of Israel.—When Joshua was waxed old, and was about to go the way of all flesh, he assembled the children of Israel to address them. And although he called them “to witness that not one thing had failed of all the good things, which the Lord their God spake concerning them, that all was come to pass, and not one thing had failed,” Josh. xiii. yet he in no wise told them, that the land of Canaan was become a sure possession, unto them and unto their seed for ever, according to the promise given to Abraham, but, on the contrary, he reminded them of the remnant of the Canaanitish people, still dwelling in the land, and warned them against intermixing with those people in marriage, assuring them, that if they did, and thus transgressed the covenant of the Lord their God, the Lord would bring evil upon them, to destroy them from off the good land which he had then given them.—That the foregoing promise to Abraham was not fully accomplished in the time of Joshua, is clear from this

statement: nor does the reign of Solomon evidence a more complete fulfilment, than the time of Joshua; and, consequently, the promise has had no fulfilment hitherto: it is, therefore, still future; for the word of the Lord shall stand, and "one jot or tittle shall in no wise pass away till all be fulfilled." With respect to Abraham personally, the promise was never fulfilled beyond the mere circumstance of his dwelling in the land of Canaan with his family: that he had the possession, or the government, or that he reigned as king over the land, is never hinted at in any part of sacred history. On the contrary, the Martyr Stephen, (Acts viii.) in the commencement of that memorable address to the Jewish council, which ended in his being stoned to death, says to them, speaking of Abraham, that "God gave him none inheritance in the land, no not so much as to set his foot in, though he promised that he would give it to him for a possession, and to his seed after him, when as yet he had no child."

It is not necessary for the purpose now in view, to trace the manner in which the promise given to Abraham, was renewed afterwards, from time to time, to his descendants in the line of the spiritual seed; but it should be remembered that Moses, and Joshua, and the prophets, each in his turn, declared to Israel collectively, before the captivity of the ten tribes, and

again, other prophets repeated continually to Judah, that judgments awaited them at the Lord's hand by reason of their transgressions--judgments, of which the Babylonish captivity was a type or figure, and which should cause them to be scattered and dispersed throughout all the nations of the earth, as a reproach, and a hissing, and an astonishment: and that in the latter day they should be gathered from out of those nations into the land which the Lord had appointed for them. Of the ten tribes carried away by Salmanassar, almost all vestiges have disappeared; and we do not find them spoken of as a distinct or subsisting race, except in the pages of modern travellers, some of whom have ingeniously attempted to shew, that tribes in North America, and others, that tribes in the interior of Asia, are probably descended from the lost ten tribes of Israel. In one of the Apocryphal books (2 Esdras xiii. 39 to 47.) they are spoken of as having passed over the Euphrates into a land very far away called Arsareth, where they dwell till the latter time when "the Highest shall stay the springs of the stream again that they may go through." If the authority of Esdras be allowed, this probably has reference to what is spoken of in Rev. xvi. 12. and also in Isaiah xi.

The dispersion of the tribe of Judah, however, is

now a standing miracle before the eyes of all men; and so wonderfully has the prophecy regarding them been accomplished, that there is hardly a nation upon the face of the whole earth, in which some of this tribe are not now to be recognized, living according to their own customs, and as a separate people, in the midst of the nations with whom they dwell. To shew that the prophecies of the restoration of the children of Israel, were not fulfilled by the return from the Babylonish captivity, it is only necessary to refer to the words of the prophecies themselves. "He shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth."—Isaiah xi. 12. "The house of Judah shall walk with the house of Israel, and they shall come together out of the land of the north."—Jerem. iii. 8. It is to be observed that these promises are to Israel, to Judah, and to Ephraim; and they are continually repeated to each throughout the prophetic writings; and it is equally impossible to maintain that these promises have been fulfilled by the return of the Jews (the tribe of Judah with a small admixture of the ten tribes) from the Babylonish captivity, as it is to assert, in contradiction to the Martyr Stephen, that a land in which Abraham "had none inheritance, no not so much as to set his foot in," and from which we see his seed cast out at this day, has

ever yet been given "unto Abraham and his seed *for ever.*"

To contend that the names Israel, Judah, and Ephraim, are used by the Holy Spirit to signify one and the same people, the Jews, is indeed to make God such a one as ourselves. The accuracy and precision which are uniformly apparent throughout the sacred volume absolutely forbid such licence. Besides, how can the word Ephraim, the name of one tribe, be used to signify Judah, another tribe, to which it appears by Ezek. xxxvii. Judah is ordained to be united in the latter day? If therefore these promises remain yet unfulfilled, their accomplishment, being future, must be considered as belonging to the Millennial day, when the seed of Abraham, part in the flesh, and part in spiritual bodies, with Abraham their father, shall sit down in the glories of that kingdom, which the Lord shall then establish upon earth, and in the land of Judah. It is matter not of speculation, nor of conjecture, but a subject proper for the investigator of prophecy, to consider whether these things are revealed. And if the Scriptures, according to the plain import of their words, point to such events, it may be asked, whether we are warranted in setting up our own opinions of probability, in opposition to the manifest declarations of the word of

truth. Indeed the right question is this—What saith the Scripture?—"How readest thou?"—"To the law and to the testimony" therefore, and "if we speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in us."

The promise to Israel, to Jacob, to Judah, and to Ephraim, that they shall be gathered again, and established in their own land, may be traced in every part of prophecy. And they are each of them spoken of substantively as a distinct person or people. When the ten tribes separated themselves from Judah, so that there were formed two kingdoms, the seat of government with the ten tribes always remained in the tribe of Ephraim; and hence the tribes collectively are often spoken of under that name, see Ezek. xxxvii. 19, but it is a name that cannot be used to signify the Jews, (the tribe of Judah) more especially as, in many passages, Judah and Ephraim are together spoken of, as two distinct and separate persons or people, whom the Lord shall unite into one in his appointed time. The ten tribes, as already remarked, have been long searched for, and in a great measure without success, but doubtless, according to the word of the Lord regarding them, they are, like Judah, scattered over the face of the earth, and mixed among the nations. Being "wanderers among the

nations," their seed, though imperfectly distinguished by us, may possibly form a considerable part of the population of the present nations of the earth, well known to the Lord, though concealed from human observation. The extreme care with which the descent of the chosen seed in every tribe and family is continually traced in Scripture, shews it to be a subject of very considerable importance: things not now seen will be made manifest hereafter, and it is not impossible, that when all secret things shall be revealed, it may be found that those of the Gentiles, who obtain like precious faith with Abraham, the father of the faithful, though apparently children of Ham, or of Ishmael, or of Esau, are in fact lineal descendants of Abraham interwoven with the Gentile population.—Considering the subject in this point of view, the promise to Abraham would be literally fulfilled by gathering Jew and Gentile according to the election of grace, (for all are not Israel who are of Israel) into the Millennial kingdom, there to sit down with the risen Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The prevailing opinion does not much differ from that which has been stated, for it is generally acknowledged, that the fulfilment of the promise to Abraham and his seed, is to be expected in the gathering of Jew and Gentile into the Christian Church.

To support what has been advanced as to the restoring of that ancient people, the children of Israel, to their own land, a few, and few only, of the numerous passages which declare it, will be stated, and other parts of Scripture will be referred to, for the satisfaction of such readers as desire further investigation. The prophecy contained in Isaiah xi. was delivered about a hundred years before the Babylonish captivity, and it treats of the blessedness of Messiah's Kingdom—"His rest shall be glorious"—and further, "It shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the *second time* to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria, &c. and from the islands of the sea, and he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth. The envy also of Ephraim shall depart, and the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off. Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim: but they shall fly upon the shoulders of the Philistines toward the West, they shall spoil them of the East together: they shall lay their hand upon Edom, and Moab, and the children of Ammon shall obey them." The prophet shews very plainly in this chapter, to the whole of which the attention of the reader is requested, that not the return from the

Babylonish captivity, but a *second* recovery of all the children of Israel, is intended. It is a recovery of Israel, of Judah, and of Ephraim, from the nations of the world, into the Lord's holy mountain, the place of his rest; and the earth shall then be filled with the knowledge of the Lord. Judah and Ephraim shall no longer strive together as adversaries—some Gentile nations shall be destroyed, others shall obey the children of Israel, and finally, the Lord with his mighty wind, shall shake his hand over the river, (the Euphrates) which shall be dried up, and there shall be a highway for his people, like as it was to Israel on their return from Egypt. It may be remarked further, that Ephraim, the ten tribes, are termed outcasts; Judah, the Jews, the dispersed; expressions, which seem intended to describe the utterly lost condition of the tribes, and the scattered state of the Jews.

Jeremiah xxx. contains a prophecy to the same effect as the foregoing—"Lo, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will bring again the captivity of my people Israel and Judah, saith the Lord, and I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it." And these are the words which the Lord spake concerning Israel, and concerning Judah :—"Fear not, Jacob, be not

dismayed, O Israel, I will save thee from afar, and thy seed from the land of captivity. I am with thee to save thee : though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee—all that devour thee shall be devoured, and they that spoil thee shall be a spoil. I will restore health to thee, I will heal thy wounds, because they call thee an outcast, saying, this is Zion, whom no man seeketh after. The city shall be builded upon her own heap, and the palace shall remain after the manner thereof. I will multiply them, and they shall not be few, and their children shall be as aforetime. Their nobles shall be of themselves, and their governor shall proceed out of the midst of them." This quotation is compressed, and a reference to the text is desirable, where it will be seen, that the promise is conveyed most distinctly to Israel, (the ten tribes) and also to Judah with Benjamin, over whom the seed of David reigned. It is to both one, and the other of them. Their seed collectively shall be called Zion, and shall be brought back into the land of their fathers to possess it. The city shall be re-built on its own heap. The Lord will multiply, and will also glorify their congregation :—and at the time when this is done, which, the prophet adds, shall be in the latter days, a whirlwind from the Lord shall go forth with fury, falling upon the head

of the wicked, and it shall not return till it has performed it.—The date of this prophecy is after the carrying away of the ten tribes, and a few years before the Babylonish captivity.

Ezekiel xxxvii. prophecies of the same things. The whole house of Israel shall be placed in their own land.—The prophet, by the emblem of two sticks united into one in the Lord's hand, is commanded to shew the joining together of Ephraim, and all the house of Israel *his* companions, with Judah, and the children of Israel *his* companions, in the latter day. The Lord will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel.—“They shall walk in my judgments, and observe my statutes to do them,” saith the Lord, “and they shall dwell in the land, which I have given to Jacob my servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt, they and their children, and their childrens’ children for ever. And the heathen shall know that I do sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore.” This prophecy seems to have been delivered after the Babylonish captivity; but the return of the Jews from that captivity, can never be insisted upon as an accomplishment of the prophecy, for Israel did not then return with Judah, nor were they united into one nation upon the mountains of Israel.

The only additional authority which shall be here adduced at length, is that of the Apostle Paul, in Rom xi.—It should seem, as if the Christian Church in those days, had already begun to doubt the fact of the children of Israel being ordained to be brought back, as a nation into their own land; and they probably then considered, as many now do, that the conversion of the Gentiles, and of the Jews, individually to the faith of Jesus Christ, was all that was to be expected as the fulfilment of that word of prophecy; and that the distinguishing features and polity of the Jews, as a nation, would thus at length gradually wear away, and Jew and Gentile lose all distinction in the universal spread of the gospel. The apostle reproves the saints in Rome for their blindness upon this matter: he explains to them (see Rom. x.) that although Israel, stumbling at that stumbling-stone, the doctrine of the cross of Christ, had not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God, and had thus disobeyed the gospel, yet God had “not cast away *his people* which he foreknew,” for that the election of grace amongst the children of Israel, had obtained the blessing, though the rest were blinded. The words *his people*, allude to the children of Israel according to the flesh, as the whole context shews, for none others are spoken of; and the apostle says of them, they have stumbled;

not that they should fall, finally, but that through their present fall, or stumbling, salvation might come unto the Gentiles; signifying, that the gospel of the grace of God in Christ Jesus, was come to the Gentiles through the casting off of the Lord's ancient people. The apostle then adds: if the casting away of Israel be the reconciliation of the world, how much more shall the riches of grace abound to the Gentile world, through the in-gathering of Israel: he reminds them, that Israel is the natural branch of the true olive-tree, which has been broken off, and the Gentiles, which are the wild olive-tree, are grafted in contrary to nature; and he assures them in terms the most decisive, that a time certainly shall come, when the children of Israel, as the natural branches, shall be grafted into their own olive-tree. In other words he adds, "Blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in: and so *all* Israel shall be saved; as it is written, there shall come out of Zion The Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob; for this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins." The apostle moreover exhorts the Church at Rome, to pay due regard to this great mystery, "lest they should be wise in their own conceits."

Many other parts of Scripture will be found in

exact unison with the texts which have been just referred to ; and for the further satisfaction of such readers as may desire it, the following are pointed out to their attention:—Psalms xxii. xxv. cxxv. cxxviii. cxxx. cxxxv. cxlvii. cxlix.—Isaiah xix. xxvii. xli. xlv. to the end.—Jeremiah xxxiii. and xlix. to the end.—Ezekiel xx. and xxxviii. to the end.—Daniel xii. and all the minor prophets without exception. The passages indeed are so numerous throughout the prophetic writings of the Old Testament, that a selection is unnecessary.



CHAP. VII.

Prophecies of Daniel—1st. The Great Image.—

2nd. The Four Wild Beasts.

The Church of Christ under the gospel dispensation, was ordained to follow its ever blessed Master, through sorrows, persecutions, and sufferings, for a long series of years; and the fourth great monarchy of the earth, and an idolatrous church, supported by, and exercising the temporal power of that monarchy, are pointed to, throughout the books of prophecy, as the chief instruments by which the Church was thus to be exercised. The circumstances of this calamitous period are more or less detailed in many parts of Scripture, and the final destruction of these adversaries, is declared to be reserved for Messiah's second coming. The inspired writers of the Old Testament treat largely of the judgments, which shall be poured out upon this power; but the most connected history of its rise and progress which they afford, is to be found in the book of the prophet Daniel, in chapters ii. vii. xi. and xii.

The second chapter of Daniel gives a general outline of this subject in the explanation of Nebuchad-

nezzar's dream, to whom the four great monarchies of the earth were shewn in his sleep, under the symbol of a great image, having its head of fine gold, its breast and arms of silver, its belly and thighs of brass, its legs of iron, and its feet part of iron and part of clay. The prophet, in explaining the vision, says to Nebuchadnezzar, "Thou art this head of gold, and after thee shall arise another kingdom, inferior to thee, (the Medo-Persian;) and another third kingdom of brass, (the Macedonian, founded by Alexander the Great,) which shall bear rule over all the earth; and the fourth kingdom (the Roman) shall be strong as iron." Some general particulars which regard this fourth kingdom, are then related, and the end of it is thus described:—"And in the days of these kings (*i. e.* of the kingdoms into which the Roman empire shall be divided) shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom (Messiah's kingdom) which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom, or rule shall not be left to other people, (*viz.* to them that obey not Messiah's voice,) but it (Messiah's kingdom) shall break in pieces, and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever; for as much (or in the same manner) as thou sawest, that the stone (was) cut out of the mountain without hands; (and that it) brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold."

The seventh chapter of Daniel affords a more particular account of the fourth kingdom of the earth, the outline only of which, is given in the second chapter. The four great empires are here described under the likeness of four wild and ravenous beasts: the first, the empire of Babylon, or of the Chaldeans, is represented as a lion with eagles' wings: the second, the Medo-Persian empire, is described as a bear, and it was said thus unto it, "Arise, devour much flesh;" thus signifying, as well by the nature of the beast itself, as by the command delivered to it, the savage barbarity and unrelenting cruelty, which was the distinguishing character of the Medo-Persian monarchs: the third kingdom had the likeness of a leopard, with four wings of a fowl upon its back, typifying the impetuosity and rapidity which attended the career of Alexander, by whom the Macedonian empire was founded; and the four wings also referring to the four kingdoms, into which the Macedonian empire was divided after Alexander's death: the fourth wild beast, signifying the fourth empire of the earth, "was dreadful, terrible, and strong exceedingly;"—his teeth were of iron, and his nails brass: "it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: it was diverse from the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns!"—which signify ten kingdoms, as explained in verse 24.

This fourth empire is the great destroyer of the saints of God; and the power which especially persecutes the Church in the latter part of the Gospel day, is thus described as a horn or kingdom arising out of this fourth empire;—"And behold there came up among the ten horns, or kingdoms, another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots; and behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things." The prophet beheld the vision till the thrones of these ten kingdoms "were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow"—"his throne the fiery flame, and his wheels burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth before him; thousand thousands ministered to him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him; the judgment was set, and the books were opened." The prophet, troubled at the vision, inquired of one of the heavenly host that stood by, the interpretation of the things he had seen. The answer was, "These great beasts, which are four, are four kings, which shall arise out of the earth, but the saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom, and shall possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever." He then inquired further regarding the fourth beast, and his ten horns, and the other horn, before which three of the horns fell, and which horn

“made war with the saints, and prevailed against them, until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints, and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom.” The reply made to him, in explanation, reveals to us the following particulars: The fourth kingdom “shall be diverse from all kingdoms, it shall devour the whole earth, and tread it down, and break it to pieces.” Out of this kingdom, ten kings or governments shall arise, and “another shall arise after them, which shall be diverse from the first, and shall subdue three” of them. This power “shall speak great words against the Most High, shall wear out his saints, and shall think to change times and laws;” and the saints shall be “given into his hand for a time, and times, and the dividing of time,” (or half a time;) that is for three times (or years,) and a half; making, according to the Jewish calculation, twelve hundred and sixty days, each day in the language of prophecy signifying a year, thus making a period of twelve hundred and sixty years. “But the judgment shall sit,” and his dominion shall be taken away, and consumed, and destroyed unto the end, when “the kingdom and dominion under the whole heavens, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve, and shall obey him.”—

To adapt the foregoing prophecy to the page of history, is attended with little difficulty at the present era of the world. This was well done in the beginning of the seventeenth century, by Joseph Mede, a very learned English divine, whose works are collected into one large volume folio. He followed in part the views of writers who preceded him, and as truth is always the same, he has in his turn been also followed by many later writers.*

The word of prophecy then, adapted to the page of history, appears to coincide thus:—the Pagan Empire of Rome having at length been brought to profess the faith of Christ, and having thus become Christian Rome, about the latter end of the fifth century, it was broken up or divided, chiefly through the inroads of the Northern nations, into ten kingdoms, or governments ; and their names are thus given

* The accurate and intelligent Bishop Newton, soon after the middle of the last century, also published a very valuable work upon prophecy, and from that time to the present, many others have contributed largely to the stock of knowledge, so that the general subject is now pretty well understood. Bishop Newton, and also Mr. Cunninghame, Mr. Faber, Mr. Frere, Mr. Bicheno, and others of modern date, may be consulted with advantage by those who desire to pursue the subject, and to judge for themselves : a work less known, written by Mr. J. E. Clarke, in 1814, entitled a "Dissertation on the Dragon, Beast, and False Prophet of the Apocalypse," contains a great variety of valuable information and research ; and others might be named. •

in Machiavel's History of Florence.—1. The Ostrogoths in Mœsia.—2. The Visigoths in Pannonia.—3. The Suevi and Alanes, in Gascogne and Spain.—4. The Vandals in Africa.—5. The Franks in France.—6. The Burgundians in Burgundy.—7. The Heruli and Turingi in Italy.—8. The Saxons and Angles in England.—9. The Huns in Hungary.—10. The Lombards on the Danube, and afterwards in Italy.

This precise number has been recognized more than once, on particular public occasions. When originally divided, about the year 456, they were found exactly ten, as Mr. Whiston (who wrote upon prophecy in 1706) has shewn. About the year 1240, in the Diet at Ratisbon, they were spoken of as ten, and they were ten at the era of the Reformation. These kingdoms have experienced many and rapid changes, but the exact number in the outset, as ever afterwards also, has been continually defined to be ten, and the Papal states of Europe are ten at this day.

And there came up among them another little horn which was diverse from the others. There sprung up the ecclesiastical power of the Bishop of Rome, which acquired to itself importance as a horn, or temporal power. Commentators do not seem exactly agreed

as to which of the three original horns or kingdoms were plucked up by the roots, or subdued before the little horn; but the patrimony of St. Peter, or the Ecclesiastical States of the See of Rome, were unquestionably formed out of the ruins of some of the original kingdoms; and it is not an easy matter now to trace accurately the history, and the boundaries of each. The acquisition of these states constituted the Bishop of Rome, a temporal prince or horn: and Bishop Newton, whose enumeration of the ten kingdoms is somewhat different from Machiavel's, and who views them as they stood at a later period, viz. about the commencement of the eighth century, considers that the three powers, which formed the temporalities of the See of Rome, were the exarchate of Ravenna, the kingdom of the Lombards, and the state of Rome. Bishop Newton, in conformity with Mr. Mede, remarks also, that the little horn is rather described as coming up after the other horns, than with them, as may be collected from a critical examination of the text.

For a time, and times, and the dividing of time, the saints of the Most High are given into the hand of this little horn, that he may make war with them, and prevail: the period is for one year, two years, and half a year; the number of days in this period is

1260, if the time be computed according to the mode of reckoning used in the days of Daniel, viz. by the ancient Jewish year of twelve months, each month containing thirty days.

In other parts of prophecy, day is used to signify a year, and the same period of 1260 days, as signifying years, is spoken of in a parallel prophecy, Rev. xi. and xii. as will be seen hereafter, so that the interpretation here given, cannot be in any degree doubtful.

By reference to history, it is found, that under the edict of Justinian in the year 529, the civil law was digested and reduced into a code, which has ever since remained, as the acknowledged law of the empire, and by that code the Bishop of Rome was established, (or rather recognized as being) in plenitude of power, supreme over the Christian Church in all matters of ecclesiastical authority, with full power to destroy and exterminate at pleasure, all whom he might consider heretics. From that time to the year 1789, the date of the French revolution, making a period of 1260 years, that persecuting power has never ceased to make war with the saints, and has continually prevailed against them; wearing out and destroying their bodies with tortures, by sword, by fire, and by divers kinds of death. But from that

period; 1789, its power has been crippled, and its strength has been so much impaired, through the convulsions, and struggles of Europe, that persecution, (though not the will to persecute,) has ceased; and now for the space of about thirty years, the saints have had rest from *Autos da fè*, and such other public acts of judicial slaughter. Not that individual persecution, perhaps even unto death, *may not possibly* be traced; but the authorised massacre, and delivering up of the saints to death, under the public authority of the state, upon the pretence of their being heretics, has not been found to prevail, if indeed it has ever existed since the year 1789, within the limits of the ten original kingdoms, or horns of the beast.

The exploits of this idolatrous power, in the words he speaks against the Most High, in his attempts to change times and laws, and in his persecution of the Church of Christ, will be more conveniently treated of, in commenting upon chap. xi. of Daniel, and the book of Revelations: but it is manifest before the eyes of all men at this day, that although he is not yet destroyed; but rather seems recruiting his strength, still the power of the Lord's truth, through the continually increasing progress of the Scriptures, and the out-pouring of the Spirit, cannot fail, ere long, if

their course be not arrested, to consume, and to destroy his dominion. But following the prophet into the revelation here made, the destruction of this idolatrous adversary should seem not to be left to the slow, and gradual effect, likely to be produced by the causes just referred to ; for Messiah will himself sit in judgment to slay the beast, and to deliver his body to the burning flame ; and there shall be given to Him, dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, may serve Him.



CHAP. VIII.

Prophecy of the Ram, and the He-Goat.—

Daniel viii.

The great image, which was shewn unto king Nebuchadnezzar in his dream, has afforded a general outline of the four great monarchies of the earth, and of the kingdom of Messiah succeeding to them. And in the vision of the four wild beasts, there was a further revelation of things, which should come to pass, in the latter part of the times spoken of in the prophecy of the image. It was shewn further, by the vision of the wild beasts, that an idolatrous persecuting power was to rise up amongst the ten kingdoms, which should be formed from out of the fourth great monarchy, which power should afflict the children of God for the long period of 1260 years, and should at length be destroyed itself at the coming of Messiah in his kingdom.

The fourth great monarchy, however, divided itself into an eastern, and a western branch, and it was from the western branch that the ten kingdoms were formed, about the latter end of the fifth century. The names by which the two branches have been distinguished, are the Latin empire, and the Greek

empire; and the scheme of prophecy might appear incomplete, if, when the western branch, or Latin empire, had been prophesied of, nothing had been said concerning the eastern, or Greek empire; for that, like the Latin empire, continuing to profess Christianity, the events of its last times might seem to be equally a fit subject for revelation. The vision of the Ram, and the He-Gast, was probably added to supply this deficiency: it will be found to contain the history of the Greek empire, down to the end of time; and it will be seen, that in each branch of the Roman empire, a desolating power was foretold, which in the latter days should bring evil upon the transgressors.

The vision of the Ram, and He-Gast, is related in Dan. viii. and commentators seem to agree upon the meaning of the first eight verses. It may therefore be desirable to state these verses in the first instance, as introductory to what follows.

Daniel viii. 1.—“In the third year of the reign of King Belshazzar, a vision appeared unto me, even unto me, Daniel, after that which appeared unto me at the first. And I saw in a vision; and it came to pass when I saw, that I was at Shushan in the palace, which is in the province of Elam. And I saw in a vision, and I was by the river of

Ulai. And I lifted up mine eyes and saw, and behold, there stood before the river, a ram which had two horns, and the two horns were high; but one was higher than the other, and the higher came up last. I saw the ram pushing westward, and northward, and southward, so that no beasts might stand before him, neither was there any that could deliver out of his hand; but he did according to his will, and became great. And as I was considering, behold, an he-goat came from the west, on the face of the whole earth, and touched not the ground: and the goat had a notable horn between his eyes. And he came to the ram that had two horns, which I had seen standing before the river, and he ran unto him in the fury of his power. And I saw him come close unto the ram: and he was moved with choler against him, and smote the ram, and brake his two horns: and there was no power in the ram to stand before him; but he cast him down to the ground, and stamped upon him: and there was none that could deliver the ram out of his hand: therefore the he-goat waxed very great. And when he was strong, the great horn was broken, and for it, came up four notable ones, toward the four winds of heaven."

The interpretation of the angel is as follows, in verses 20, 21, 22.—

"The ram which thou sawest, having two horns, are the kings of Media and Persia. And the rough goat is the king of Grecia; and the great horn that is between his eyes, is the first king.—Now that being broken, whereas four stood up for it, four kingdoms shall stand up out of the nation, but not in his power."

The fulfilment may be thus traced:—

The ram, which is the well-known crest or ensign of the Persian monarchs, represents the Medo-Persian empire. The two horns referring to the Medes and to the Persians, point out the latter power as the stronger of the two, and as coming up last. When the Prophet first observed the Medo-Persian ram, he was in the act of pushing, or extending his conquests towards the west, and towards the north, and towards the south, until he became the greatest kingdom upon the earth. At this time, the Macedonian he-goat, (which animal was the ensign of Greece) under the command of Alexander its first king, (who is represented as a notable horn between his eyes) was seen to come up, and to trample upon the Medo-Persian ram. And thus Alexander, with a rapidity of conquest almost unexampled in history, overthrew the

empire of the Medes and Persians, and established his throne at Babylon, where he died in the prime of life. His kingdom was very great, but soon after his death it was divided between four of his generals: and thus four kingdoms stood up, but not in his power—for they were neither ruled over by his posterity, nor were they equal to his kingdom in strength.

It can hardly be necessary to trace the boundaries of Alexander's dominions, for the purpose of demonstrating to the reader, that they extended generally over those countries, which in later times formed the Greek Empire, and which afterwards were overrun by the Mahometan powers. Mr. Faber and Mr. Clarke have discussed the subject fully. But it must not by any means be lost sight of, that Alexander's was a Greek kingdom, that he is called king of Grecia in the present vision, and that in Dan. xi. the realm of Grecia is again spoken of, as a power subsisting under that name in those times; and thus a connection may be traced exemplifying the identity, which the present prophecy exhibits, between the first and the last Greek Empire, that is, between the Greek kingdom of Alexander, and the Greek kingdom which was formed in the fourth century by the division of the Roman Empire, into its Eastern and Western branches; and the prophecy

will be found to embrace the history of this Grecian Empire, as continued through the two periods. The vision thus proceeds :—

V. 9. "And out of one of them came forth a little horn, which waxed exceeding great toward the South, and toward the East, and toward the pleasant land. And it waxed great even to the host of heaven; and it cast down some of the host and of the stars to the ground, and stamped upon them. Yea, he magnified himself even to the Prince of the host, and by him the daily sacrifice was taken away, and the place of his sanctuary was cast down. And an host was given him against the daily sacrifice, by reason of transgression, and it cast down the truth to the ground, and it practised, and prospered."

The interpretation follows thus :—v. 28. "And in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors are come to the full, a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up. And his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power, and he shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper, and practise, and shall destroy the mighty, and the holy people. And through his policy also he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand : and he shall magnify himself in his heart, and by peace shall destroy:

many ; he shall also stand up against the Prince of princes, but he shall be broken without hand."

In the time of the latter Greek kingdom, Mahometanism arose as a little horn, from small beginnings ; soon it waxed exceedingly great, and over-ran the fairest provinces of the world. Its rise was from within the Greek dominions, as a scourge upon the transgressors, in the beginning of the seventh century, when the Greek Church had filled up the measure of her iniquities, by following the idolatrous abominations of her Roman sister. Rapine, cruelty, and dissimulation have everywhere marked the steps of Mahometanism, whether under the immediate followers of Mahomet, or under the Ottomans in later times ; and the dark enigmas of the Koran have never failed to give pretence for perfidy, and for breach of faith with unbelievers, whenever it might suit their purpose. Religious enthusiasm imparted to them a strength not their own, and they derived a further strength from their crafty policy of incorporating into their armies, the youth of those countries which they subdued : and as they laid waste the kingdoms around them, the sabres of the Moslems continually acquired a keener edge, through the lie of their prophet, and the sensual paradise, promised to those who died in battle. Their conquests have been chiefly

towards the South, over Arabia, and the Eastern part of Africa, towards the East, over Persia, and Hindoostan, and towards the North, over Syria, and Asia Minor, and part of Europe. Judea also, the pleasant land, as it is specially termed in Scripture, has not escaped their yoke. All these things, with their unexampled destruction of men, of cities, of edifices, and of every monument of art, and civilization, which is esteemed among the more enlightened nations, afford an accurate fulfilment of what was revealed, concerning the king of a fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, who should destroy wonderfully, and practise, and cause craft to prosper in his hand. It was also said that he should cast down to the ground, some of the host, and stars of heaven, even the mighty and the holy people, by which may be understood, professors and teachers of Christianity in different Christian countries which he conquered, where for the most part, the very name of Christianity has been destroyed, and Mahometanism established in its stead. His magnifying himself in his heart, and against the Prince of the host, and taking away the daily sacrifice, may be referred to the titles assumed by Mahomet, and by the Sultans; to his consigning to slavery, or to death, all who would not confess to his creed; and to his setting up his own name, above that of the Lord of life and glory. The titles

of "God upon earth"—"Shadow of God"—and "Brother of the Sun and Moon," assumed by the little horn of the East, are not unlike those of his Papal brother in the West. The daily sacrifice which he hath taken away, is doubtless the Lamb of God, the blood of which, the Mahometan tramples under foot, counting it an unholy thing. If the literal temple of Jerusalem were intended under this expression, there would be found also a literal fulfilment, for upon the site of that Temple, a Turkish Mosque has been erected.

Two circumstances remain.—He shall stand up against the Prince of Princes, and shall be broken without hand. Already has he thus stood up, but perhaps in this particular he may not yet have completed the full measure of his iniquity: for when the scenes of the last days are developed, the followers of Mahomet will probably be found amongst those, who shall engage in personal contest with Messiah. The nature of this conflict remains still to be seen: but of the horn of Mahometanism it is revealed, that it shall be broken without hand—that is, without the intervention of any human instrument.

The time assigned for the duration of the vision comes lastly to be noticed. It is a point of the

first importance as connected with the general exposition of prophecy, and it is stated thus :—

V. 13, 14. "Then I heard one saint speaking, and another saint said unto that certain saint which spake; How long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, and the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot? And he said unto me, unto two thousand and three hundred days: then shall the sanctuary be cleansed."

From these verses it is seen, that, from the commencement to the close of the vision, there will be 2300 years, at which time, the Church of Christ being cleansed from all impurity, the Millennial dispensation will commence: for it should be recollected, that the sanctuary cannot be cleansed until the Lord comes to his temple, as Malachi iii. intimates. The exact commencement of the vision is not defined clearly, lest men should know the seasons, which God keepeth in his own power; and many different opinions have been maintained by different commentators. The event has certainly made it manifest, that the commencement is not to be computed from the time when the prophet saw the vision, for that was the third year of Belshazzar, or before

Christ 553, which gives the close at the year 1747, when the changes foretold, did not in any respect take place. A date which seems probable, and which has been assigned by some writers, is 481 before Christ, being the date of the great expedition of Xerxes against Greece. That expedition was a pushing of the ram westward, and, as before observed, he was in the act of pushing westward when first seen by the prophet.—The prophecy of Daniel xi. which gives the history of the great apostacy in the West, begins from this point of history; and it may possibly have been intended thus to mark the commencement, or point of time, of the present vision going forth into action. If this should be the date, the vision terminates in the year 1810, being thirty years from the French revolution, and 1290 years from the setting up of the power of Popery, according to the scheme which is given in p. 71. Whenever the appointed epoch shall arrive, events will speak for themselves; and a few months may be sufficient to bring to its test, the date that is now suggested. Our opinion, therefore, may well be suspended for a short time; and it may be sufficient to search for another date, when this is found not to be the true one.

Before the subject is closed, it is necessary to apprise the reader, that much contrariety of opinion

has prevailed respecting the interpretation of the present prophecy. It has been referred to Popery, to Mahometanism, to Antiochus Epiphanes, and also to Mahomet personally, and, again, to the Ottoman dynasties. The masterly disquisition of Mr. Clarke, who maintains this last opinion, deserves every praise, although his results are not assented to. Mr. Faber will, also, be read with pleasure, and with profit. He refers the prophecy to Mahometanism, but upon grounds which differ from those which have been here suggested. That it cannot be applied to popery is clear from this circumstance, that the word used to express the power, or rather the iniquity of the little horn, is **YWS**, translated transgression, and it specially signifies a defiance of God, in setting up falsehood against His truth—*prevaricatio*, as in Montanus. The word applied to popery in Daniel xi. is **YPS**, abomination, a word continually used in the Old Testament in reference to idolatry, or the heathen worship of idols. Rebellion against the revelation of Jesus Christ, is the distinguishing feature of Mahometanism; the corruption of it, by the admixture of idolatry, is the peculiar character of popery.

CHAP. IX.

Prophecy of the Seventy Weeks—Daniel ix.

In the three preceding prophecies, Daniel has presented to our view the four great empires of the earth, and the two antichristian powers arising in the East and in the West, ordained on the one hand as scourges upon the ungodly, but at the same time to try, and to purify the Church of Christ unto the end. The prophet has also shewn, that, when all these powers are destroyed, the kingdom of Messiah will be established. Hitherto the history of the Church has rather been treated of incidentally. But, in his four concluding chapters, the prophet enters upon it more directly. In these chapters are found two distinct prophecies: and that which is contained in chapter ix. describes the formation of the Christian Church, which is ordained under its glorious leader to become the fifth kingdom, described in Daniel ii. and which, as a stone cut out of the mountain without hands, shall break in pieces, and consume all other kingdoms, and stand itself for ever. The other prophecy, which occupies the three last chapters, gives briefly the history of the people of that

fifth kingdom during the times of their affliction and their warfare, and until they enter into rest. Taking then a general view of the arrangement of the book of Daniel, it will be found to present, first a prophetic history of the kingdoms of the earth amongst which the Christian Church was destined to be brought to light, and then the history of that Church down to the consummation of all things. The prophecy of the seventy weeks describes the bringing forth, or commencement of the Christian Church; and it is only necessary to premise, that the seventy weeks were fulfilled at the first advent. The prophecy is stated thus :—

In the first year of Darius, son of Ahasuerus, the prophet Daniel, groaning under the Babylonish captivity, but understanding by the books, the number of the years, whereof the word of the Lord spake by Jeremiah the prophet, that He would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem, set his face unto the Lord to seek by prayer and supplications, that He would turn away his anger, and cause his face to shine upon his sanctuary which he had made desolate. Dan. ix. 1 to 19. The angel of the Lord, even Gabriel, was sent in answer to the prophet, and he delivered unto Daniel the revelation which will be found at verse 24: and which, notwithstanding the

circumstances under which it was given, does not in point of fact refer to the times of the Babylonish captivity, or to the deliverance of the people from thence; but reveals far better things, even the great and everlasting blessings, which were ordained in after ages, to be brought to light under the gospel. And it is well worthy of observation, how, in this, as in many other parts of Scripture, different prophetic periods will be found to run parallel to each other. Seventy years was the period appointed for the Babylonish captivity, and seventy weeks of years (or 490 years) the time for the continuance of the Jewish Church under the dispensation of the Second Temple. The words of the angel were as follows :—V. 22, “ O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding. At the beginning of thy supplication the commandment came forth, and I am come to shew thee ; for thou art greatly beloved : therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision. Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people, and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy. Know therefore, and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore, and to build Jerusalem, unto the Messiah the Prince, shall be seven weeks and

three score and two weeks, the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times,"—or, *in strait of times*, see margin.

The interpretation may thus be traced in the way of paraphrase upon the words of the text :—

V. 24. Seventy weeks of years (490 years) are the time appointed unto the Jewish people, and their Church. Then shall the transgression be finished, and an end shall be made of sin ; then, also, shall the atonement, and reconciliation for iniquity be completed, by the offering up of the one and only true sin offering, even by the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world ; then, also, shall the true and everlasting righteousness, which God himself hath prepared for his people, be made manifest in him, who is their sin-bearer, and their law-fulfiller ; the prophecy and the vision also shall be fulfilled, and the anointing of Messiah, as King and High Priest of his people, shall be made perfect.

V. 25. Know therefore, and understand, that from the date of an edict for the reform of the Jewish Church, which hereafter shall be placed upon record, and the object of which shall be to bring back

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that Church to the due observance of those things; which are ordained by the law of Moses, unto the commencement of the new dispensation which Messiah the Prince shall establish, there will be 483 years; which are divided into two periods, the one, seven weeks of years, (49 years) and the other sixty-two weeks of years, (434 years.) But it is in the strait of times,—in the narrower, or the shorter one of these two periods, that the reform of the Jewish Church shall be effected.

In support of the foregoing interpretation, it is to be remarked, that the words “thy people and thy holy city,” in v. 24, thus addressed to the prophet, can only be referred to the Jews and their Church; and consequently Jerusalem, in v. 25, can be no other than their *Church*, or civil and ecclesiastical polity, in its ceremonial and legal observances, according to the law of Moses. To refer this expression to the houses, the buildings, or the walls of the literal city, were to lose sight of the plainest principles of interpretation of prophecy. Now the commandment for reforming the Jewish Church, is the decree of Artaxerxes, which will be found in Ezra vii. 7—28; and the object of it was to re-establish the due observance of the ceremonial law, which had been very grievously departed from under

the Babylonish captivity. The date of this decree, stated in the margin of the English Bible, is 457. before Christ, being 490 years before the crucifixion : compute from thence 483 years, the product of the seven, and the sixty weeks in v. 25, and we are brought to the twenty-sixth year of the Christian era, in which year, as is also stated in the margin of the Bible, "came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and saying, Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Matthew iii. 1, 2. That this is to be considered as the coming of Messiah, the Prince, according to the signification of the present prophecy, is evident from other Scriptures, for we read, "The law and the prophets were until John : since that time the kingdom of God is preached." Luke xvi. 16. And again, "All the prophets and the law prophesied until John." Matthew xi. 13. The commencement of John's ministry was then the beginning of that new dispensation, which was afterwards established under Messiah, the Prince, fully and finally by his crucifixion, seven years afterwards, in the year thirty-three, when the seventieth week ended.

It was during the first and shorter period of forty-nine years, that the Jewish Church was reformed, and Scripture will be found to mark this

date also. The last act of that reformation is mentioned in Nehemiah xiii. viz. the putting away of the wives, and of the offspring of the unlawful marriages, which had been contracted during the captivity. The margin of the English Bible places the date of this transaction, and several others, about 484 years before Christ. The same date, however, cannot belong to all the events there mentioned, and a more critical inquiry demonstrates, that this particular act of reform by Nehemiah was rather more than forty-five years after the decree of Artaxerxes, although the precise date of it, is not ascertained.*

The angel continues thus, according to the marginal reading of the English Bible :—v. 26. “And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, and shall have nothing ; and the prince’s future people shall destroy the city, and the sanctuary. And the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war, it shall be cut off with desolations.”—V. 27. “And he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week ; and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and upon

* The reader who desires to examine this more critically, may refer to Mr. Faber’s Dissertation upon the Prophecy of the Seventy Weeks, where the subject is treated of at considerable length. See p. 327.

the battlements shall be the idols of the desolator, even until the consummation : and that which is determined shall be poured upon the desolator."

The paraphrase may be thus continued :—And the 483 years being fulfilled, by the completion of the second period of 484 years, the seventieth week begins, and then Messiah shall be cut off, or separated from the Jewish Church, even as the husband is divorced from the wife, and he shall retain nothing there, for by *his* gospel he shall supersede the law: The Jews shall no longer continue as his chosen people ; and the Gentiles, whom he shall adopt in their stead, shall at the appointed time overthrow the Jewish temple, and its ritual. Upon the preaching of the gospel, the very sanctuary itself shall be polluted, and shall become a mere lifeless form ; for every one who is brought to know the Lord God of Israel, to worship him in spirit and in truth, shall thenceforth quit the Jewish, and cleave to the Christian dispensation. The end of the Jewish Church shall be accompanied with an overwhelming destruction upon the people, and desolation shall be their portion, even until the time of the end. And Messiah shall ordain unto many a new dispensation, or covenant, which shall endure for one week only, even for the last week of the seventy—that is, for the

period of seven years, from the commencement of the ministry of John the Baptist, unto the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus. And in the middle part of that week, or period of seven years, Messiah shall begin his own personal ministry, and being then made manifest as the true Lamb of God, and the only sacrifice for sin, spoken of by the law and the prophets, He shall cause his followers to look from the shadow to the substance, and from the types to their glorious Antitype, so that they may discern the inadequacy of legal and ceremonial sacrifices for the taking away of sin. And after the Jewish Church shall have been destroyed, and the people themselves scattered amongst the nations, the idolatries of the Roman desolator shall prevail over the face of the earth, and shall continue until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled, and the mystery of God is accomplished; and then a swift destruction shall be poured out upon that destroyer.

The foregoing paraphrase adapts itself so readily to history, that it cannot be necessary to add any further comment.

CHAP. X.

Prophecy of the Latter Days—Dan. xi. and xii.

The eleventh chapter of Daniel enters into the detail of those events, which belong to the Church of Christ during the latter times of its warfare. In the tenth chapter the angel tells the prophet, "I am come to make thee understand what shall befall *thy people* in the latter days, for the vision is for many days." The term *thy people*, can only refer to the Jews, or to the Christian Church; and the scope of the prophecy, extending as it does through so many centuries, leads naturally to the conclusion, that the Church of Christ, both under the Jewish and also under the Christian dispensation, is comprehended under this expression.

The vision which the prophet saw is not related, or perhaps he saw nothing more than the appearance of the glorious personage, with whom he held converse, "but he understood the thing, and had understanding of the vision," and the angel delivered to him the interpretation of it, which is continued through the eleventh and twelfth chapters.

The vision was in the reign of Cyrus, and the angel says, v. 2. "There shall stand up yet three kings in Persia, and the fourth shall be far richer than they all; and by his strength, through his riches, he shall stir up all, against the realm of Grecia."—The fourth after Cyrus was Xerxes, whose wealth was so abundant, as to be almost proverbial; and his expedition into Greece with an immense army, raised in part from his own subjects, and in part collected from his allies, is a very memorable event of ancient times.

Verse 3. "And a mighty king shall stand up, that shall rule with great dominion, and do according to his will; and when he shall stand up, his kingdom shall be broken; and shall be divided toward the four winds of heaven, and not to his posterity, nor according to his dominion which he ruled; for his kingdom shall be plucked up, even for others beside them."

Alexander is the king here spoken of; he ruled over Greece, subdued Persia, and added India to his conquests; and having reigned something less than thirteen years, he died at Babylon before he attained the age of thirty-three; after which, four of his generals divided his dominions between them, and

his family soon became extinct. If the details of this long chapter were followed accurately from the beginning, a clearer light might probably be thrown upon that portion of the prophecy, which relates to gospel times. But the commentators, to which the writer of these pages has referred, do not appear to him very satisfactory ; and if, as he inclines to think, the general history of the Church, as standing among the nations of the earth, both under the law and under the gospel, form the subject of the prophecy, the scheme of interpretation which has been adopted by Bishop Newton and others, does not meet the subject. The discussion of this part of the prophecy will not, however, advance the inquiry into the time and circumstances of Messiah's second advent ; and, therefore, as in verse 31 an expression will be found, which determines with precision, that the fourth kingdom of the earth, or Roman power, is there spoken of, it may be well to take that verse for a guide, and to pursue from thence the examination of what remains.

V. 31 declares, " they shall place the abomination that maketh desolate ;" and that by this expression, the Roman power, under one form or other, is intended, cannot be questioned ; for the Lord himself so states it to his disciples in Matthew xxiv. 15, and

Mark xiii. 14, as will be seen by Luke xxi. 20. The context of each of these scriptures, gives the whole of Christ's memorable reply to the inquiries of his disciples, with regard to the period of the destruction of Jerusalem, the time of his second coming, and of the end of the world. Regarding the destruction of Jerusalem, which doubtless is typical of the destruction which in the latter day shall overtake the mystic Babylon, and all her followers who are resting in the letter, and have not the Spirit, our Lord says, in words that may be applied to both events, "when ye, therefore, *my disciples*, shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth let him understand) then let them which be in Judea flee to the mountains."—The corresponding passage in Luke's gospel runs thus—"And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh, then let them which are in Judea flee to the mountains," &c.—The armies which destroyed Jerusalem were those of the Roman empire, the fourth kingdom of the earth: and connecting this fact with the passages just quoted from the gospels of Matthew and Mark, it is manifest that the Roman power, either in its character of the fourth beast, or as the little horn of that beast, is signified by Daniel under the expression, "the abomination

that maketh desolate :?" and, further, that the papal power of Rome is intended, may be collected from the original text. The peculiar characteristic of Rome, as a pagan, or as an imperial power, has ever been its military prowess ; its papal characteristic is idolatry. Now the Hebrew word, *עֲבֹדָה*, in verse 31. translated abomination, is used in the Old Testament continually to signify idolatrous abomination, and never in reference to military power : the Greek word, *Εἰδωλολατρία*, used in the Septuagint translation, and which is again found in Matthew xxiv. 15. and Mark xiii. 14. before referred to, is of a similar import ; and hence it may fairly be presumed that idolatrous, and not military Rome is intended.

In which of the preceding verses the Roman power is first mentioned, may be questionable. Perhaps it might be successfully contended, that verse 16 speaks of it, as standing "in the glorious land, which by his hand shall be consumed." If so, verse 16 would probably refer to pagan Rome destroying the Jewish Church and people ; and what follows, to verse 31, might be intended to trace the history of the Christian Church during the times of the Roman emperors, until that empire professed Christianity, and the ten kingdoms, into which the western por-

tion of it was divided, united together under the influence of the eleventh, or papal horn, in persecution of the Church of Christ. If this view be the correct one, the notable exploits of the Roman ecclesiastical power, in destroying the saints, in blaspheming the majesty of the most high God, and in establishing its sway over the nations of the earth, form the subject of the rest of the chapter, and it will be found to divide itself as follows:—Verses 33, 34, and 35, treat of the persecution of the saints,—verses 36, 37, 38, and 39, set forth his blasphemies,—and the remaining verses, from 40 to the end, declare the prevalence of his power amongst the nations. The whole is concluded, and in different places is interspersed with declarations of the judgments that await him. A transcript of the text, accompanied by a short paraphrase, will be sufficient to shew the writer's view of the interpretation of this prophecy, and to illustrate generally his opinion of its fulfilment. It is the less necessary to enlarge, as the views of Mr. Mede who may be referred to, are not very dissimilar.

Verse 31. "They shall pollute the sanctuary of strength, and shall take away the daily sacrifice, and they shall place the abomination that maketh desolate."—They shall corrupt the simplicity which is in

Christ, even the faith which was once delivered to the saints, and shall not allow the finished work of Jesus to be set before the people; but shall deny the great gospel truth of justification only by faith in *Him*, and shall set up a justification by works, alms-deeds, penances, and human merit, worshipping the Virgin Mary and the saints, and their images and relics, and thus bringing an abomination into their sanctuary, and the doctrine of devils into the ordinances of their temple.

Verse 32. "And such as do wickedly against the covenant shall be corrupt by flatteries, but the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits."—The power before described shall gain over to himself, by temptations of worldly advantage, those professing people who are not steadfast in the faith: but the true followers of the Lamb shall stand up to maintain the truth, notwithstanding every evil which may await them.

Verse 33. "And they that understand among the people shall instruct many, yet they shall fall by the sword, by flame, by captivity, and by spoil many days."—They who are taught of the Spirit, shall become preachers of righteousness to many around them, but they shall be persecuted unto death, their

goods shall be wasted, and they themselves shall be destroyed by the sword, by imprisonment, and by fire, for the long appointed period of 1260 years.

Verses 34, 35. "Now when they shall fall, they shall be holpen with a little help, but many shall cleave to them with flatteries; and some of them of understanding shall fall to try them, to purge, and to make them white, even to the time of the end, because it is yet for a time appointed."—During the foregoing period of trouble and persecution, the Lord's people shall, from time to time, find help and rest for a short season, to strengthen and refresh them under their accumulated afflictions; but many deceivers shall arise, and, under the specious pretence of favouring their cause, or of protecting them from danger, shall seduce them into unworthy compliances; and, through their devices, some who are spiritually minded shall be turned away from the truth, and shall fall, not to perish, but that they may be chastened and approved unto their master, and that others may be excited to watchfulness.

The persecution of the Church of Christ having been described in the preceding verses, the blasphemies of him who is the persecutor, form the next link of the prophecy.

Verse 36. " And the king shall do according to his will, and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every God, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished, for that that is determined shall be done."—The Roman Bishop having gained supreme authority in the Church, shall raise himself above the power of the state, and shall exercise his dominion over all: and, unrestrained by the laws of God or man, he shall exalt himself even as God, assuming the title of Holy Father, pretending his wisdom to be infallible, and that he has power to forgive sins, or to cast soul and body into hell: and in this unhallowed career of impiety and blasphemy he shall be permitted to proceed, and to prosper until the 1260 years, which are the appointed time for the affliction of the Church, are ended.*

Verse 37. " Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers, nor the desire of women, nor regard any

* Mr. Faber considers this verse as introducing a new subject of prophecy, viz. an atheistical or infidel power which shall arise in the last days; and he applies it to revolutionary France, and the Buonaparteau Government. This mode of interpretation requires that the verse should be detached from the preceding verses, which Mr. F. accomplishes by reading the passage, " And a king shall do according to his will."—See his Dissertation, Vol. I. p. 32. edit. 1808.—It is objected, that the Hebrew word מלך, can only signify *The King* before spoken of.

God ; for he shall magnify himself above all."—He shall not regard the heathen gods whom his Roman forefathers bowed down to, nor the God of nature whom the philosophers amongst them, worshipped ; and setting aside all reverence for Him, who is the sacrifice for sin, and the justifying righteousness of his people, and whom the women of all ages before the incarnation, have desired for the fruit of their womb, he shall exalt himself above every God, and seat himself in the temple of God, styling himself " The Lord God the Pope," and commanding his fellow worms, to worship him.

Verse 38. " But in his estate he shall honour the God of Forces, (Mahuzzim, or God's protectors, margin) and a God, whom his fathers knew not, shall he honour, with gold and silver, and with precious stones, and pleasant things."—And despising the true and only Mediator, he shall ordain an idolatrous worship of other intercessors, such as the Virgin Mary, (stiling her the Queen of Heaven,) the angels, and the souls of departed saints. And he shall erect, and endow churches for their worship, and shall enrich their shrines, and collect their pretended relics, and set up their images and pictures, and the figure of a crucifix, to bow down before them, adorning these objects of his adoration, with gold and silver,

and precious stones, and appointing a large train of his hireling priesthood to officiate in these blasphemous rites.

Verse 39. " Thus shall he do in the most strong holds with a strange God, whom he shall acknowledge and increase with glory, and he shall cause them to rule over many, and shall divide the land for gain."— And he shall pursue his idolatrous course, giving, from time to time, an increase of praise and honour to these objects of his profane worship, by pretending that they work miracles. And he shall send out swarms of his clergy, both regular and secular, to spread themselves over the land, each in his appointed district, to levy contributions upon the people, and to increase the revenues of his Church, by a traffic in penances, pardons, absolutions, and indulgencies, and under the pretence of praying the souls of the departed out of purgatory, and many other such contrivances of priestcraft.

Verse 40. " And at the time of the end shall the king of the south push at him. And the king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots and with horsemen, and with many ships."— And when the 1260 years (the appointed time of the Church's tribulation) are ended, the Scriptures of

truth shall obtain currency amongst the nations. And the eyes of many shall be opened to discern the abominations of Popery. In the south, inroads shall be made upon the spiritual dominions of the Roman Bishop, and from the north he shall be assailed by innumerable copies of the written Word, advancing like a whirlwind against him.

The division of the Scriptures into chapters and verses, though highly useful and important, will sometimes cause obscurity, from the divisions being made incautiously, and without sufficient attention to the context.—An instance of this kind is found in verse 40, for the subject of the Pope's prevalence amongst the nations, commences in the middle of this verse.—It goes on thus :

Verses 40, 41, 42, and 43. “ And he shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow and pass over. He shall enter also into the glorious land, and many countries shall be overthrown ; but these shall escape out of his hand, even Edom and Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon. He shall stretch forth his hand also upon the countries, and the land of Egypt shall not escape ; but he shall have power over the treasures of gold and of silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt, and the Lybians and Ethi-

spians shall be at his steps." It must be recollected, that the extension of a spiritual power is spoken of. If monarchical, and not pontifical sway be looked for, the interpretation becomes difficult ; but when we advert to the species of power predicated of, the fulfilment is strikingly accurate.—He shall extend his priestly dominion into many countries, beyond the boundaries of his ten-kingdomed empire, even into every quarter of the earth ; and he shall overspread them with his priests, and his monks, his superstitions, and his idolatries. He shall enter even into that land which the Lord sets apart for himself, as the great emporium of his truth. Many shall be entirely subdued by him, but those countries which are inhabited by the recognized descendants of Edom, of Moab, and of Ammon, shall not be brought to serve him. Egypt, however, shall not escape, but her treasures shall be at his disposal, and the Lybians and Ethiopians shall follow after him. Most accurate has been this fulfilment.

Verse 44, 45. " But tidings out of the east and out of the north shall trouble him ; therefore he shall go forth with great fury to destroy, and utterly to make away many. And he shall plant the tabernacles of his palaces between the seas in the glorious holy mountain, yet he shall come to his end, and none shall

help him."—But in the last times the word of God, which he has for many years kept concealed from the eyes of the people, shall go forth : he shall hear of its rapid progress in the north, and in the east of Europe : he shall find his establishments at Goa, and in other parts of the East ; and, also, his South American possessions, broken in upon by Protestant Missionaries : and the general spread of the Scriptures, throughout the world, shall forewarn him that his downfall is approaching. Enraged at the prospect before him, and furious against the progress of the truth ; he shall, by his bulls and his manifestos, and by every artifice of intrigue, endeavour to stem the torrent, and to prevent the Scriptures being brought into any place, which is subject to his control ; and he shall prepare himself to take vengeance upon those, who presume to disobey his commands. As a last great effort, he shall endeavour to gain spiritual and temporal authority, in that glorious holy mountain in the midst of the seas, even the land of Bibles, from whence the angel hath taken his flight with the everlasting gospel, to preach to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people. And he shall be allowed to plant, even in that land, his superstitious tabernacles for idolatrous worship, and for the education and support of Jesuits, and Monks, and Nuns, and for priests, whom he sends forth to beguile and to deceive

the people. But his appointed time shall overtake him, all his multiplied efforts shall only hasten his destruction, for the word is gone forth against him. Most assuredly shall he come to his end, and none shall help him, for the Lord God hath spoken it.

The ensuing chapter describes the time and manner of the destruction of the Roman Power. Following the text, we find that at this time, Michael,—he who is the likeness of the invisible God, even Messiah the Prince, shall stand up for the seed of Israel, and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation; and then shall the chosen seed be delivered. The first resurrection also shall then take place, and many (not all) who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. Then they that are wise unto salvation, being clothed with their spiritual bodies, shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and such of them as have been the means of bringing many to the truth, shall be like brilliant stars in the midst of their brethren for ever.

The prophet is commanded to seal up the prophecy till the end, to signify that it shall not be fully understood till the 1260 years are ended; but in the mean

time it is intimated, that, through the searching of many, the knowledge of these things shall be generally increased in the Church.

A further intimation as to the duration of the things spoken of, is given in verses 5, 6, and 7, declaring that the vision is for a time, times, and a half :—for one year, two years, and half a year ; making three years and a half, or 1260 prophetic days, as before explained. (See page 71.) And when the Lord shall cease to scatter the power of his people, (his Church) that is, when the time of 1260 years, during which the saints were given into the hand of the Roman power, that he might prevail over them, is ended; then shall these things be finished. The prophet, not comprehending the exact meaning of what he heard, inquires what shall be the end or consummation of these things; and he is told a second time, that the words of the prophecy are sealed, and shall not be understood till the time of the end, viz. till the expiration of the 1260 years: that many shall be turned to righteousness, and shall be purified and approved, but the children of the evil one shall go on in their evil ways, and none of them shall understand, for they only shall understand, who are made wise by the teaching of the Spirit. And for their instruction it is added, that the end or consummation shall be

at 1290 years, or prophetic days, from the time when the papal abomination was set up. A further period is then adverted to, as a time of great blessedness, viz. 45 years beyond the 1290 : " Blessed is he that waiteth and cometh to the 1335 days."

Connecting the circumstances related in this prophecy with what is declared in other places, it may be deduced, that this period of 45 years will probably be the time for the accomplishment of the great wonders ; by restoring Judah and Israel, the spiritual seed, Jew and Gentile ; by cleansing the Church of Christ from all false professors, and from every unclean thing, and putting away from her sin and sorrow for ever ; by destroying all those who know not God, and who obey not the gospel of Jesus Christ, and bringing every one upon the face of the earth to bow the knee to him ; by purifying the heavens and the earth, which now are, by fire, to purge away the curse ; and by making the new heavens and the new earth, in which righteousness shall dwell, under the peaceful, blessed reign of Messiah. That this eventful period of the 45 years will be ushered in by dreadful judgments upon the ungodly, we have seen most plainly announced, and if the date, which has been here assigned for the termination of the 1260 years, be the correct one, a large portion of those

now dwelling upon the earth, may be called upon to see more or less of these wonders. Blessed in that day will be the man whose trust is in the Lord Jesus, for he, like Daniel, shall stand in his lot, to receive a crown of glory incorruptible, and that fadeth not away.



CHAP. XI.

General View of the Apocalypse.

The Book of Revelations contains a general statement of the dispensations, which were ordained unto the Church during the times of the gospel. There is no portion of Scripture which affords a more distinct view of the glories of Messiah's Kingdom. To understand the interpretation of this book, it is necessary in the first place to consider the general outline or plan upon which it is constructed ; for unless this be correctly understood, the prophecies will be much obscured. The book is described as "the revelation (or unfolding of the mystery) of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants, things which must shortly come to pass." The blessing which is pronounced upon him "that readeth, and upon them that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein," affords ample encouragement ; for, it is added, the "time is at hand ;" intimating, that when that book should be understood, the time of the consummation would be nigh.

Commentators have generally treated of the Book of Revelations, as if it were a continued history ; and, as if each part or symbol arose from out of that which precedes it, marking the regular order of succession, and the chronology of the different events. The difficulties and perplexities which attend this mode of interpretation, are such, that many intelligent and sober minded Christians have been led almost to conclude, that it was not possible, in the present state of light and knowledge, to assign to this book any fixed or determinate meaning. And thus, with many, a discredit has been thrown upon all attempts at the interpretation of it. Nor is this to be wondered at, when we advert to the complex, and difficult schemes, which are to be found in commentaries. To form an adequate judgment of some of those learned productions, a very accurate knowledge of history is indispensable : and it is a work of no small labour, to comprehend the scheme of symbols which is insisted upon as a preliminary in others. The majestic simplicity, which marks the Sacred Volume in every part of it, forbids the belief, that the Spirit of God should have delivered for the instruction of the Church, a book which is not to be understood upon much easier and plainer principles. If it were not so, the word of prophecy would stand in the wisdom of the learned of this world, whereas

it is written "He will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the understanding of the prudent," and he "hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty." That a general knowledge of history is necessary for applying prophecy to the events of which it treats, is not intended to be denied, but it is confidently maintained, that the broad and prominent events in the history of the Church, are the events which alone are to be looked to, and that the affairs of the nations are no further introduced than is absolutely necessary, for setting forth a sort of general outline of the history of the Church of Christ. All the other books of prophecy are constructed upon this plan, and it seems absurd not to apply to the Book of Revelations, the same rule of interpretation, which obtains in all other places. In the other books, instead of a long continued historical detail of minute circumstances, the broad outline only is set forth. Separate and comprehensive views are taken, one after the other, in separate and distinct prophecies, each adding further particulars not contained in that which went before it, but, at the same time, each extending quite through the general subject, and carrying it on to the consummation of the mystery in the millennial day. The subjects follow one another, but they do not arise, the one out of the other; they begin and end separately, each is perfect in itself, and each for

the most part goes down to the end, that is, to the Millennium; a brief examination of some of the prophetic books will establish this position.

As the prophet Isaiah stands first among the prophets in the canon of Scripture, his book shall be first referred to, and it will be found to contain many prophecies, having this common mark, that from whatever time they may commence, they terminate in the Millennium—for example—Chapter i. is a distinct prophecy, setting forth the iniquity of Judah and Jerusalem, the Lord's anger, his judgment upon them, their restoration as at first, and the destruction of the transgressors, and of the sinners together in the last days. Chapters ii. iii. and iv. form another complete prophecy concerning Judah and Jerusalem; the several events spoken of are the same as in the preceding prophecy, but the order in which they are detailed, is varied, and additional circumstances are mentioned; the subject, however, is carried on to the final establishment of the glorious Zion of the latter day, that is, the Church of Christ, in Millennial glory.—Chapter v. is a separate prophecy, regarding the Lord's vineyard—the Jewish nation. Chapters xiii. and xiv. form another prophecy, the burden of Babylon, alluding primarily to the ancient city of Babylon, but having also a special further reference

to the mystic Babylon of the gospel day. The final deliverance and establishment of Zion; and her thanksgiving for the fall of her enemies, conclude the subject. Chapters xv. to xxxv. describe the Lord's judgments upon the several nations by which Zion has been afflicted, and her latter day glory; and here will be found particular and subordinate prophecies, each in itself distinct, applying to the different nations separately, but they centre, and are summed up in Chapters xxxiv. and xxxv. which describe, in general terms, the judgments upon the nations collectively, and the glory of the Lord's ransomed ones, when finally brought into Zion: other examples might be adduced from Isaiah, if it were necessary.

The book of Jeremiah abounds with similar instances. Chapters ii. to vi. form one prophecy, setting forth the transgression of Judah, and conveying to her the promise of deliverance, and establishment in Zion, in the last days. Chapters vii. to x. inclusive, are another prophecy, which ends with the children of Judah turning to the Lord, and calling upon him to avenge them of the heathen, who have afflicted them in the days of their tribulation. Chapters xi. and xii. afford another prophecy to the same effect, but setting forth with more distinctness their final deliverance, and their return to their own land.

Chapters xvi. and xvii. are each a distinct prophecy. This arrangement is easily to be traced throughout the whole book of Jeremiah; it is hardly necessary for the present purpose to do so, and it may be sufficient to request that the reader will examine it for himself.

The book of the prophet Ezekiel is constructed upon the same plan as Jeremiah, and like the Apocalypse of John, it contains various prophetic symbols; but neither the prophecies nor the symbols arise out of each other, nor do they follow in historical order, although, like those of the Revelations, the last in order afford more ample details, regarding the circumstances of the latter-day glory. Chapter iv. represents, under a symbol, the situation of Israel and Judah, when dispersed among the nations, to eat defiled bread in the habitations of the Gentiles for the appointed time. Chap. v. sets forth, under another symbol, the destruction of one third of the children of Israel and Judah by pestilence, one third by the sword, and the scattering of the other third amongst the nations, whilst a few in number are bound to the prophet's skirts, as the Lord's election of grace amongst the people. Chapter vi. is also a distinct prophecy, as well as Chapter vii. each representing the captivity and desolation of Israel and

Judah. The whole of Ezekiel may be thus traced out into distinct prophecies, and a little examination will be sufficient to satisfy the reader that the whole book is composed of detached parts, such as have been described, each of which is a complete prophecy in itself, having a beginning, and a middle, and an end, and for the most part each carrying down the subject to the Millennial day.

The book of Daniel is also arranged in the same way. The prophecies of that book have, for the most part, been examined already, and the reader has had an opportunity of seeing how totally distinct they are, whilst, at the same time, they illustrate and explain each other, forming together one complete whole. In the general construction of the book of Daniel, in the subjects of which it treats, and in the arrangement not only of the prophecies, but also of the symbols, it bears a striking resemblance to the book of Revelations. The sets of symbols, however, are so manifestly unconnected, that no commentator has attempted to reduce them into one continued prophecy; and it is much to be regretted, that a different plan has been adopted in interpreting the book of Revelations.

The writings of the minor prophets, also, are evi-

dently constructed upon the plan which has already been described, but it cannot be necessary, that each of them should be separately noticed : Zechariah, however, affords so very striking an illustration of what has been advanced, that he must not be altogether passed over. His prophecies, like those of the Revelations, are delivered principally under symbols ; the first six chapters contain each of them a symbolical prophecy, separate in itself, and totally unconnected with what precedes or follows it. Chapters vii. and viii. may be taken, perhaps, as one prophecy ; but the rest of the book is very much detached ; and if possible, more so than the different prophecies of Daniel : and there is no single instance of the symbols running the one into the other, upon a plan like that which is generally supposed to obtain in the book of Revelations.


If the Apocalypse is examined upon the principles which have been here laid down, it will be found to contain four separate sets of symbols, each having a distinct object, and having also the number seven as its distinguishing characteristic. Seven candlesticks, seven seals, seven trumpets, seven vials ; there will be found also the history of the Lord's two witnesses ; of the woman and her seed who are persecuted, and of those who persecute them ; of the great harlot and her destruction ; of the marriage of the Lamb, and

of his triumph over his enemies ; and, lastly, a description of the Lamb's wife, which is the new Jerusalem. The subjects are thus divided, and the different portions of the book which apply to each subject, may be stated generally as follows :—The seven candlesticks describing the spiritual state of the Church of Christ under its seven principal periods, from the days of the apostles to the Millennium, occupy the four first chapters. The seven seals which describe the outward circumstances of the Church, from the first preaching of the gospel, till brought into the Millennial rest, begin with chap. v. and end with the first verse of chap. viii. which verse is detached from its context under the present division of the chapters. The trumpets extend from chapter viii. v. 2. to the close of chapter xi. and they set forth the warfare produced by the gospel going forth amongst the nations, and the judgments upon kingdoms, which corrupt the gospel ; and in the course of this set of symbols, the history of the Lord's two witnesses is introduced. Chapters xii. xiii. and xiv. describe the persecutions of the Church, and that idolatrous Church and empire, by whose instrumentality these persecutions are effected ; and they conclude with the final triumph of the Church, and the destruction of her enemies.

The seven vials of wrath describe the judgments upon the papacy, and those which attend the advent; they occupy chapters xv. and xvi. A more particular view of the great idolatrous Church in the last days, and of her final and utter destruction, is given in chapters xvii. and xviii. The remaining chapters describe the glory, and the triumphs of Messiah, the perfection of his bride the Church, and the unbounded purity and blessedness of that joyful period, when Messiah the king shall reign over the new earth, in the fulness of his personal glory.

In going through the book of Revelations, the prophecies will be considered in the order and arrangement mentioned in the foregoing detail; and, when thus placed together and elucidated by other Scriptures, they will be found to reflect a light upon the things of the second advent, which many, perhaps, are not aware of. The arrangement here proposed is widely different from that of preceding commentators; and many of the details also will be found equally to differ. The reader must judge for himself amidst conflicting opinions: but, as it would interrupt the subject, were other writers to be referred to and criticised, the subject will for the most part be carried forward without any such reference. Each prophecy will be considered separately: and thus the unity of

each, and the general harmony of the whole, will be most distinctly seen. It will be found that they illustrate each other, and that although detached, and complete in themselves, yet, taken together, they form a series and a body of prophecy. That the present plan of interpretation should not before have occurred to others, (if indeed that should be found the case,) is no argument against its truth. It is only at the time of the end (or fulfilling) that the true interpretation of these and their corresponding prophecies, was ordained to be made known to the Church, and it is certain we can know nothing of divine things, except the Spirit of God teacheth. If, therefore, these things shall be treated of according to the mind of the Spirit, to the Lord be the praise and the glory: and if, on the other hand, the views which are here insisted upon, should indeed be incorrect, knowledge will doubtless be increased by that biblical research, which will be necessary for bringing them to the test, according to the unerring standard of the word of truth.



CHAP. XII.

Prophecy of the Seven Churches :—Ephesus, Smyrna, and Pergamos considered.—Rev. ii. 1—17.

The first prophecy contained in that mysterious book, the contents of which it is now proposed to examine, was delivered under the symbol of seven stars, and seven golden candlesticks. These were designed to represent primarily the seven churches of Asia, to each of which, the Apostle John was commanded to deliver a message of exhortation and reproof, from his risen and glorified Master. The Lord Jesus spake to John in the Isle of Patmos, proclaiming himself to be "Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last," and commanding him to write what he saw in a book, and to send it to the seven churches which are in Asia. The apostle on turning towards the place from whence the voice proceeded, observed "seven golden candlesticks, and in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, one like unto the Son of Man :"—"He had in his right hand seven stars, and his countenance was as when the sun shineth in his strength." Overcome with astonishment, the apostle fell at his feet as dead, and our Lord raised him up with those sweet words of

encouragement, which he has ever been wont to speak unto his people, "Fear not." After announcing himself as the risen Jesus, the Lord of life and death, he thus repeats his command :—"Write the things which thou hast seen, *both* the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter ; the mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest, are the seven churches."

The churches to which these messages were sent, were peculiarly under John's superintendence ; for he had appointed bishops over them all, and he resided much at Ephesus, as may be collected from Irenæus and Eusebius. If the address to each were considered as nothing more than a mere statement of the condition of those churches at that time, and of the judgments which awaited them on their turning from the right ways of their Master, a fulfilment might be shewn, by tracing the history of each, as far as the particulars which have been handed down, afford materials for the purpose : but the circumstance of these churches being immediately under the care of this apostle, as their metropolitan, could, alone, hardly account for their being thus selected as the peculiar objects of pro-

phecy. They are certainly not the most eminent of the primitive gospel churches, though, perhaps, one or two of them might claim to be so considered : and if nothing more had been intended than to record the condition of seven churches of the apostolic age, with a view to point out their subsequent falling away, as an awful example for future times, those churches only which attained the highest celebrity, would doubtless have been selected for the purpose. It may therefore be reasonably conjectured, that something more must have been designed ; and the opinion seems confirmed by the solemn admonition which concludes each separate address to the several churches, repeated as it is, in the very same words, no less than seven different times—" He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." It should be recollected further, that " no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation," and that the things which happened to the fathers, " happened unto them for types : " and those things were recorded in Holy Writ, according to the mind of the Spirit, for the admonition and instruction of the church in the latter days. In all the prophetic types, there is a literal and figurative fulfilment ; and if these churches are types, the same will be found here. That the book of Revelations, which throughout is composed of symbols, should, in this solitary instance,

be restricted to a literal interpretation, will hardly be insisted upon ; and, therefore, after attending to the letter, an explanation of the type also, will, without further preface, be offered.

The churches are seven in number, and, it is to be recollected, that throughout Scripture this number is peculiarly marked, as denoting completion and perfection. They are—1. Ephesus, 2. Smyrna, 3. Pergamos, 4. Thyatira, 5. Sardis, 6. Philadelphia, 7. Laodicea ; all of them churches in Asia, and types of seven principal epochs, or periods of the church, which were to be manifested under the gospel dispensation. The symbols here used are a star and a candlestick, or rather lamp-stand, signifying the light of the church, or its spiritual condition, not its outward circumstances, for they are spoken of in the other prophecies of the Revelations. It should be further recollected, in proceeding to explain the figure, that it does not refer to the outward, visible, or professing church, but to the true Israel of God, the chosen seed of Christ, whose spiritual state is delineated under these types, from the first preaching of the gospel to the dawn of the Millennial day.

The address to the church at Ephesus runs thus :—

“ Unto the angel of the Church of Ephesus write ; these things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand,

who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks : I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them that are evil : and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles and are not, and hast found them liars : and hast borne, and hast patience, and for my Name sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted. Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember, therefore, from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works, or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent. But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate. He that hath an ear, let him ear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." Rev. ii. 1—7.

The apostle Paul first visited Ephesus, and abode there for a short time in the year of Christ 54, being on his way to Jerusalem : and at the request of the Christian converts, he returned to them a few months afterwards, and remained for three years. The state of the Church at Ephesus, which was gathered together under his ministry, may be seen from the epistle he addressed to them, when a few years afterwards he was himself a prisoner at Rome ; and his commendation of " their faith, and of their love to all the saints," places the Church at Ephesus high amongst the churches of that day. But as Paul foretold them, when he took leave of the elders at Miletus, Acts xx. grievous wolves afterwards entered in amongst them, not sparing the flock, and of their own selves men arose, speaking perverse things, and drawing away

disciples after them. Judgments then followed, the light of the gospel was withdrawn, the glory of the city became dim, destruction finally took place, and of this magnificent metropolis the ruins only now remain, affording a precarious shelter to a few scattered herdsmen, who are all of them followers of Mahomet. Such has been the literal fulfilment, intended under a type, or figure, to represent the fate of the primitive or apostolic church. That church, from the day of Pentecost, came under the open government of the Holy Spirit, and was according to the signification of the name *desirable*; but it was destined at the appointed time to have the candlestick removed, never more to be replaced. The apostolic church was in itself altogether a peculiar dispensation, ordained to last only for the time, or age, whereunto it was appointed. It was under the open and visible guidance of the Spirit; and the miraculous gifts of the Spirit, such as power to heal the sick, to raise the dead, to speak in unknown tongues, to discern, to try, and to cast out spirits, were, under this dispensation, given freely to the apostles, and by them also conferred upon others, through the laying on of their hands. And there was a diversity of gifts amongst them, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, and for the edifying of the body of Christ—the Church. The power of working miracles

was during this time, ordained as a sign to the unconverted, that the power of the Lord might be manifested, and seeing the wonders wrought in his name, they might believe : but when the Canon of Scripture was completed, the open ministration of the Spirit gradually passed away, and at length ceased, giving place to that more secret ministration, which was ordained of the Lord to succeed it. From this time, the written and preached word, under the inward teaching of the Spirit, has become the guide of the church, being appointed so to remain till the Millennial dispensation shall supervene. The ministration of gifts, which obtained in the apostolic church, came visibly to the outward senses ; the work of the Spirit, in after times, has only been made manifest in the hearts and consciences of the people ; so that we cannot hesitate to consider this latter dispensation as the more highly spiritual of the two : and seeing that it has ever pleased the Lord to lead his church from the lower to higher ministrations, it could not well be doubted, even if the type before us did not reveal it, that the open ministration of gifts is passed away *for ever*—"the candlestick removed out of his place." The promise to those who remain faithful during the time of this dispensation, is to be found in verse 7, and in this, as in the other addresses to the churches, it is made to him that overcometh. The promise runs

thus :—" To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God." We read, also, in another place :—Whatever is born of God, overcometh the world, and this is the victory which overcometh the world, even our faith." 1 John v. 4.

The church which is addressed in the second place, is that of Smyrna ; and the name signifies Myrrh, alluding, doubtless, to the sweet-smelling savour of those works of faith, and labours of love, which its antitype was ordained to bring forth, whilst bearing the testimony of Jesus, under the awful tribulations which attended her.

" Unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write: these things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive; I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them, which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan. Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried: and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches: he that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death." Rev. ii. 8—11.

The present state of the city of Smyrna, is a striking illustration of this prophecy. It has been for a long series of years under the dominion of the Mahometan

powers ; but still a few professors of Christianity have resided there, subject at all times, and without redress, to whatsoever insults or injuries, the arbitrary malice, or wanton caprice of the 'Turks, might think proper to inflict upon them ; and holding even their lives upon a very precarious tenure. The antitype intended, is doubtless the Church of Christ, suffering under Pagan persecution. The dreadful cruelties which she endured from Pagan Rome, are well known to every one who is conversant with ecclesiastical history ; and in the address to the Church at Smyrna, the glorious works, the severe tribulation, and the outward poverty of the church during this era, seem plainly alluded to : but, it is added, " thou art rich," rich indeed in faith, and in a company of blessed martyrs. The ten Roman persecutions are signified by the expression of " tribulation ten days," and the exhortation to be faithful unto death, denotes plainly the slaughter of the saints. As the reward of them who overcome, a crown of life is promised, and the glorious riches of that crown will be revealed, when the Lord shall make up his jewels.

The third address is to the Church in Pergamos, as follows :—

" To the angel of the Church in Pergamos write : these things saith he, which hath the sharp sword with two edges :

I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is : and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth. But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there, them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit fornication. So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate. Repent, or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches : to him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth, save he that receiveth it." Rev. ii. 12—17.

The site of Pergamos is from sixty to seventy miles distant from Smyrna, and, like that city, it is now under Turkish dominion. Some few who profess the name of Christ continue still to reside there ; but they are in a state of almost abject servitude, much more deplorable than that of their neighbours at Smyrna. It is said, that from this latter place, priests were accustomed for a long period of time to visit them, to perform the outward services of religion ; but whether the practice continues to the present day, is uncertain. The two preceding types have shewn the Church of Christ, first, under the open ministration of the Holy Spirit, and, secondly, under Pagan persecution : its third condition is in Pergamos,

and the name signifies height—elevation. This state the church attained, when the chiefs of the Roman empire embraced Christianity. It was then lifted up on high, and exalted upon the face of the earth, and for a short season the true followers of the Lamb dwelt in the centre of corruption, even where Satan's seat was; for that by Satan's seat the government of the Roman empire is signified, appears very evident, on comparing Rev. xii. 3, with Rev. xiii. 2. Here then was the Church of Christ exposed to a trial of her faith, far more severe and dangerous than any she had before endured, at the time when she remained under persecution. For there arose false teachers among them, bringing in privily damnable heresies, and the spirituality of the outward Church was soon dissipated, and lost, in the contention for worldly advantages. The doctrines which carnal preachers introduced, were made stumbling-blocks to many; and many also were seduced from the purity of the truth, and from the simplicity which is in Jesus, mixing law and gospel together, and changing the truth into a lie. Men vainly imagined that a vital profession of faith, was not inconsistent with the enjoyment of all worldly pleasures and advantages; and the line of distinction between the world and the church was nearly, if not altogether, obliterated, in a vain, unhallowed effort to unite spiritual, and carnal things together. In this

condition of the Church, multitudes daily fell away, returning like the dog to his vomit, or like the sow to her wallowing in the mire : but still, under these circumstances, there were yet found faithful witnesses, who did not deny the faith, even in the days of Antipas the martyr. Who or what may be signified by this name, or by the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which is described as being hateful to the Lord, cannot now be collected, otherwise than as matter of conjecture, and therefore it must be passed over ; but the promise made to those who were faithful under this dispensation, contains a plain indication, that the true followers of the Lamb were now about to be withdrawn from the eye of carnal observation, and to remain as the Lord's hidden ones, known only to him, to themselves, and to one another : for the promise is, that they shall feed upon the hidden manna of his word, and shall receive the white stone which hath in it a new name written, which no man knoweth, save only he that receiveth it. The condition of the spiritual children, who sojourn within the precincts of the antitypical Pergamos, is aptly shadowed forth by the present state of the Christians who dwell within that city. Pergamos (*i. e.* height, elevation) —How art thou fallen ? The name of Jesus is now scarcely heard in the city, and were it not for

the occasional visits of preachers who come from Smyrna, exposed to persecution and tribulation, no savour of the Redeemer's name from the lips of a disciple, would be found within the walls of Pergamos.



CHAP. XIII.

Prophecy of the Seven Churches concluded:—Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea considered.—
 Rev. xi. 18—28, and cxi. 1—21.

The Church in Thyatira is the subject of the next address, which is contained in these words :—

“ These things, saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet like fine brass : I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith ; and thy patience, and thy works ; and the last to be more than the first. Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach, and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols. And I gave her space to repent of her fornication, and she repented not. Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her, into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds. And I will kill her children with death : and all the churches shall know that I am he, which searches the reins and hearts : and I will give unto every one of you according to your works. But unto you, I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak ; I will put upon you no other burthen, but that which ye have already ; hold fast till I come. And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations : and he shall rule them with a rod of iron, as the

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vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers, even as I received of my Father. And I will give him the morning star." Rev. ii. 18—28.

In the well known City of Thyatira dwelt Lydia, in the time of the apostles, of whom it is written, that the Lord opened her heart, and she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul, and was baptized, and all her household. The city has now lost its name, and is called, by its Turkish masters, Akhifar, or the White Castle, from the quantity of white marble which is found there. What was the extent of its primitive Christian Church, or what were the circumstances of the declension of that church, can hardly be traced: and now the very name of Christian is so entirely effaced, that scarcely a vestige of it remains in the city. The name Thyatira is said to signify a sweet savour of labour, or a sacrifice of contrition, from *θυα* scent, and *τισην* to bruise. And if the Church in Thyatira is rightly judged to be a type of the Church of Christ, under Popish dominion and persecution, the name will doubtless indicate the sweet perfume, which ascended from the works of faith and patience of those saints, who then shed their blood in bearing witness of their Master. The works of the Church in Thyatira are very particularly adverted to, for they are twice mentioned; and the evils to which she is exposed for 1260 years from the

idolatrous and persecuting Jezebel, form the burthen which she was appointed to endure. The history of Jezebel, the wife of Ahab, would afford an interesting type of the apostate church, designated under that name, if there were leisure to trace it out : but it must suffice to mention, that the type, like the anti-type, was the great and determined enemy of the Lord's prophets, having formed a resolution to destroy them, and to effect by every means she could devise, the utter abolition of the worship of the true God. Such, indeed, has been the ancient, and also the modern Jezebel, and sad has been the worldly state of the redeemed ones, whilst groaning under the power of these enemies ; but upon those of the gospel times there has been laid no other burthen, and the Lord has comforted and strengthened them : and they have the promise, that Babylon the Great, the mother of harlots and abominations, shall be utterly destroyed in the day of her visitation, and that they who have been found faithful during this time of trial, shall, in the Millennial day, be exalted amongst the nations, to rule them with a rod of iron, even as Jesus hath received of the Father. The concluding words—"I will give him the morning star," may possibly relate to some particular honour or glory, which they shall partake of when Messiah reigns.

The fifth Church is Sardis, and the address runs thus :—

“ These things saith he that hath the seven spirits of God, and the seven stars : I know thy works, that thou hast a name, that thou livest, and art dead. Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die, for I have not found thy works perfect before God. Remember, therefore, how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee. Thou hast a few names, even in Sardis, which have not defiled their garments: and they shall walk with me in white; for they are worthy. He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment, and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.”—Rev. iii. 1—5.

Sardis, in former times, was the capital of the Lydian kings, and the beauty and extent of its ruins denote its ancient magnificence. Little but conjecture is left to us, as to the primitive church which was formed there: it has utterly fallen to decay. The city is now reduced to a mere village, inhabited chiefly by herdsmen, and if there are any who bear the name of Christians, they are without a place for public worship, and under the miserable yoke of Turkish slavery. The name Sardis will be found to signify a remnant, and the type seems to point out the spiritual condition of the church, after emerging from

out of the bondage and abominations of Popery at the Reformation. Being then delivered from persecution, and supported by the civil power, the church, as in her former exaltation under Constantine, soon began to decline in spiritual things. Honours, dignities, preferments, and worldly emoluments proved themselves, for the second time, dangerous enemies to her peace, and she declined in doctrine, and in practice. Allured by prospects of advantage, worldly-minded men entered in as teachers, and the result is now apparent; for there is not to be found in any country of Christendom, a reformed national church, which has not declined, more or less, from that standard which was insisted upon at the Reformation. This type represents the Church as in itself maintaining an Orthodox profession of sound faith, but the members of it, for the most part, making that profession with the lips only, without its having any influence either upon their hearts or their lives. Amongst this chaff, however, pure wheat is to be found: even in Sardis there will be some, who shall not defile their garments, and to them is the sweet promise given, that their Lord when he comes will own them. That the condition of the Church, here represented, will continue till the coming of Messiah, seems clearly pointed out in the type.

The Church in Philadelphia is the sixth, and she is addressed in the following words :—

“ These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth and no man shutteth, and shutteth and no man openeth : I know thy works : Behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it : for thou hast a little strength, and has kept my word, and hast not denied my name. Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie : behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee. Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world to try them that dwell upon the earth. Behold, I come quickly : hold fast that which thou hast, that no man take thy crown. Him that overcometh, will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out, and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is New Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God, and I will write upon him my new name.” Rev. iii. 7—12.

Philadelphia, like the other cities, is now over-run by the Turks, and of its primitive church very little is to be collected. There are found the ruins of an ancient church, formerly dedicated to St. John, but now converted into a dunghill : and there are three or four edifices still used for public Christian worship, according to the forms of the Greek Church. The Christian population is reckoned to be about 200 families. The type represents the condition of the

Lord's people, abiding in brotherly love, from the time of the Reformation to the end. That any particular sect or party should be intended, is very much to be doubted. The United Brethren (the Moravians) bear a name somewhat similar to Philadelphia in its signification, but this name was probably intended to designate a much larger portion of the Church, including generally those, who, being not the mere supporters of human establishments, but sitting loose to such worldly rudiments, using them however to profit, hold the unity of faith in the bond of peace, and in righteousness of life : and who, coming out of the world, and separating themselves from the ungodly, walk in blessed communion with their honoured and beloved Lord. The door of eternal life has been thrown wide open to all such as these ; the Lord himself has opened, and no man can prevail to shut it : they have the unspeakable privilege of enjoying his more immediate presence ; for he reveals himself unto them as he does not reveal himself to the world ; they see him, they know him, they rejoice in him, and they live upon him, to their great and their endless comfort. These children shall be honoured in the day when their glorious Master is made manifest, for he has promised to confess them before men, that they may receive praise from those who before despised them. The promise that they shall be kept from the

great hour of temptation, reveals the awful truth, that in these last times a temptation cometh upon all the world, to try all the dwellers upon earth. And it is even so at this day! "They cry, peace and safety." They say, "Where is the promise of his coming?" They build, they plant, they marry, and they are given in marriage. And although the signs of the times denote the Lord of glory to be at hand, even at the doors, so powerful is the temptation of unbelief, that the cry of fool, idiot, methodist, enthusiast, and fanatic, issues in a moment from all quarters, against every one who endeavours to awaken their attention to the consideration of this tremendous truth. But from these things the chosen ones shall be preserved, and they shall rejoice in the day of the Lord Jesus.

The seventh and last address, which is to the Church of the Laodiceans, is couched in these words:—

"These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God. I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing, and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed; and that the shame of

thy nakedness do not appear : and anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten ; be zealous, therefore, and repent. Behold, I stand at the door, and knock : if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. To him that overcometh, will I grant to sit with me on my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne." Rev. iii. 14---21.

The city of Laodicea was not far distant from Colosse ; and it will be seen by Coloss. iv. 13, 16, that there was also a flourishing church in that city in the apostolic times. The judgments here denounced, have been literally fulfilled upon Laodicea ; for the city has been totally destroyed ; and even its very ruins are deserted, and become a mere receptacle for wild beasts. The type represents the gospel church of the last day—the time of the judgment of the nations, as the word imports ; which church, at Messiah's coming, must necessarily pass away, to give place to a better dispensation. Awful, indeed, is the language in which the Holy Ghost describes the spiritual condition of that church. They, even of the true seed, are neither hot nor cold. And is it not so at the present day ? Are not many of the Lord's dear children well inclined to support the pretensions of Popery, upon false notions of liberality ? Are not many of them living in part to the world, and in part only to the Lord—lukewarm in doctrine, lukewarm in

profession, lukewarm in principle, lukewarm in practice ; maintaining the truth with an indifference most lamentable ; esteeming themselves to have attained, and as having need of nothing ; wise in their own conceit ; puffed up with fancied graces ; seeking a holiness in the flesh ; denying many precious truths ; and speaking evil of those, who are more spiritually-minded than themselves ? To such (and it may be feared the number is great and increasing,) the exhortation is here given, to buy the true gold of the gospel, that they may be rich indeed ; and to anoint their eyes with eye salve, that they may see more clearly, and that they may no longer stumble, like blind men, upon the dark mountains of unbelief, speaking unkindly of those who are led to prefer the light. The near approach of Messiah is declared, in express terms, in the prophecy now under consideration ; and the chastening of those who are his, is the peculiar dispensation of the time. The reason is doubtless this, that they may be made partakers of his holiness ; and that being separated from fleshly and worldly rudiments, they may be kept waiting and prepared for their Lord. Ordained, not to pass through death, but to be caught up to meet the Lord in the air : (1 Thes. iv. 13—17.) it is peculiarly important that their walk should be such as becometh dear children, cleansed from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, and giving no

occasion to the adversary : for the Lord cometh, to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in them that believe ; and there is no truth more plainly insisted upon throughout the Sacred Volume, than that, at his coming, they, and they only, who shall be found walking worthy of him, will be allowed to escape the judgments which shall then come upon the earth. But the Lord speaketh "peace unto his people;" and "it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call upon the Lord shall be delivered, for in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the Lord hath said, and in the remnant whom the Lord shall call."

In thus considering these types, we may trace the spiritual progress of the gospel church of Christ, through the seven great periods of her warfare, from the first to the second advent. The accuracy with which the types adapt themselves to the passing events of each age, and to the condition of the church in each age, is sufficient to mark their signification ; and it is found, as in those of the Old Testament, that the names assist the explanation : in both Testaments, indeed, names are prophetic representations of what must assuredly come to pass. It has been observed by the learned Bishop Newton, that if the map of *Asia Minor* is inspected, it will be found that the seven

churches lie in a kind of circular form, so that the natural progress is from Ephesus to Smyrna, from Smyrna to Pergamos, from Pergamos to Thyatira, from Thyatira to Sardis, from Sardis to Philadelphia, from Philadelphia to Laodicea, and from Laodicea round to Ephesus again. This, adds the Bishop, is the order which John hath observed in addressing them, and was probably the circuit that he took in his visitation : and if he is right in this conjecture, a new beauty is to be discovered in the type.

The first and last states of the church, Ephesus and Laodicea, were ordained to pass away, as it has been already shewn ; and of the latter it may be observed, that the several intermediate conditions of the church, seem to merge into that one : and so accordingly, if the state of the church at this day be carefully examined, it will be found that the preceding state of it, as it was in Smyrna, in Thyatira, in Pergamos, in Sardis, and in Philadelphia, still continues more or less apparent in the church ~~now~~ in Laodicea. Upon the first and last state only, does the Lord come in judgment ; in one instance to remove the candlestick, and light by which the church was enlightened, and in the other to cast her out, or reject her as being loathsome and hateful in his sight : and, as confirming the preceding idea, it should also be

remarked, in regard to the other states of the church, that the judgments threatened, are not, as here, directed against the churches themselves, but against those who have either persecuted or corrupted them. How soon the final judgment may be looked for, is a matter of the most interesting consideration: and it must never be forgotten, that "in such an hour as we think not, the Son of Man cometh."

CHAP. XIV.

Prophecy of the Seven Seals.—Four first Seals considered.—Rev. iv. v. and vi. 1—8.

The second series of symbols, which the book of Revelations contains, is to be found in chapters iv. v. vi. and vii. It ends with the first verse of chapter viii. According to the present division of chapters, this verse has unfortunately been detached from its context. The seven seals here described, form another prophecy. The church of Christ is represented, as passing through the gospel dispensation into its millennial rest; and the seals embrace new particulars, filling up, in some degree, the outline described in the preceding prophecy. The seal of a deed or instrument, is that which ratifies, or gives effect to it. When sealed, the act is complete. Thus may the seals of this prophecy be considered as pledges of God's faithfulness, in bringing the appointed periods, each to its appointed termination. The end, the fulfilment, the completion of the times of prophecy, is particularly denoted under these symbols. That end is rest—the rest of the Lord's sabbath—the rest of the Church of Christ, when it enters into millennial glory.

The fourth chapter of the Apocalypse represents the Apostle, as being brought into the more immediate presence of Jehovah, even into the holy of holies, where God was seated on his throne, holding a sealed book in his right hand—"a book written within, and on its back side, sealed with seven seals." The book was taken from out of the hand of him, who was seated on the throne, by the Lion of the tribe of Judah, who alone "was found worthy to open and to read the book," and "to loose the seven seals thereof." The revelation of the persons of God and of his Christ, contained in chapters iv. and v. might afford matter of inquiry, but it is foreign to the present purpose, and it seems sufficient to remark upon the glory here revealed, even the glory of God, and of his Christ—that Christ is manifested as the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person, whilst every tongue confesseth to his name, that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. He, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David, the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, stood in the midst of the throne, and upon his taking the book from out of the hand of God, the living creatures which were in the midst of the throne, and round about it, even the cherubim or likenesses of the great ones, and the elders, and the angels which were round about the throne, and every creature which was in

heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, and all such as were in the sea, and all that were in them, joined in one general song of praise and thanksgiving, ascribing all blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, unto him that sat on the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.

Unlike the books of modern times, the books of the ancients consisted of skins or sheets of parchment, fastened, and then rolled up together, the contents of which would be rendered inaccessible, by affixing a seal, so as to secure the outside sheet. Of such kind, was the book here described. It contained seven rolls, each having a separate seal. No direct intimation is afforded, as to the nature or contents of the book, except that upon breaking or opening each seal, in its order of succession, to unfold the several rolls, a new symbolical appearance was presented to the eyes of the apostle. Commentators, with almost one consent, have pronounced the sealed book to be some particular portion of the Apocalypse; alleging, that the Apocalypse is divided into two distinct parts, one of which is the sealed book here spoken of, and the other, the little open book mentioned in the tenth chapter: but what precise portion formed the sealed book, and what constituted the little open book, they are by no means agreed. The

more ancient commentators considered the sealed book as ending with chapter ix. Bishop Newton observing that under this division, *that* which is called the little book, is made the larger of the two, proposes to divide the two books at the conclusion of the seventh trumpet, which he considers to end with v. 18 of the eleventh chapter; the nineteenth verse of that chapter being, as he thinks, improperly allowed to remain there; it being connected with, and introducing, what now forms chapter xii. But this division will not obviate the difficulty; for the little book is still found to contain as much matter as the other, and perhaps rather more. Mr. Faber uses arguments to shew that the little book forms chapters xi. xii. xiii. and xiv. of Revelations, and no more; and Mr. Frere considers the sealed book to contain the History of the Roman Empire, and the little open book the History of the Church. This contrariety of opinions might be sufficient to create a doubt, as to all that has been advanced on the subject; more especially as the text itself does not by any means demonstrate the division thus contended for. Some other interpretation of the type may therefore naturally be sought after; and the writer of these remarks is persuaded, that so far from signifying two different portions of the Apocalypse, the sealed book is the Old Testament, and the open book the New Testament

Scriptures : the one received, fulfilled, opened, and explained on earth by the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, in the days when he came in the flesh ; and the other delivered by him, as the text represents, Rev. x. 9, into the hand of the apostle, with a command to prophecy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings. The opinion here advanced, may be supported by the following considerations :—

The Scriptures of the Old Testament were the testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ, who, in the fulness of time, was to be made manifest in the flesh. He is the sum and substance of all that is there written ; in and by him the whole was ordained to be fulfilled ; he, therefore, is accurately represented as taking the book from out of the hand of the Father ; and as being the only one who could loose the seals, and unfold the mysterious leaves. He, the Lamb, fulfilled the law and the prophets, and finished the work which his Father had given him to do : and by the eternal Spirit he offered himself without spot unto God : and when he had by himself purged our sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high. It was not till he had triumphed over death, and that the legal dispensation had passed away, giving place to the glories of the gospel ; that the contents of this sealed book could plainly or distinctly be seen. When

he had risen from the dead, he expounded unto his disciples in all the Scriptures, the things concerning himself, beginning at Moses and the prophets, and shewing them that Christ ought to have suffered, even as he did suffer, and to enter into his glory:—and he opened their understandings that they might understand the Scriptures; and might know the fulfilment of all the things which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms concerning him: and he commanded that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name. In fulfilment of the promise given, the Spirit of Christ brought all things afterwards to their remembrance; and continually from time to time the Spirit has since revealed to the Church, the hidden mysteries of this book; shewing the application of it, not only to the person, the work, and the sufferings of the Lord Jesus in the flesh; but its further application to him and his Church as the anointed ones of the Father, or to use what some may think a quaint expression, the *one Christ mystical*.—He, the head; the Church, the body, and each individual believer, a member of that mystical body, united in one—as it is written, He is, “the head over all to the Church, which is his body,” Eph. i. 22: and “we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones,” Eph. v. 30: and again, “as the body is one, and hath many members,

and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ," 1 Cor. xii. 12. Under this divine teacher, the gospel Church has been led to see, that the sealed book of the Old Testament, though written for the direction of the people under the dispensation of the law of Moses, does in fact contain not only a complete body of gospel truth, but also a perfect chain of prophecy concerning the Church of the latter day, representing the whole history of that Church under symbols, figures, and historical types, more or less distinct; all of which may be traced, and applied to the circumstances of the gospel times, continuing the prophetic revelation of them, down to that great day, when the Lord Jesus, even Messiah, King of kings, and Lord of lords, shall take to him his great power, and shall reign, and shall establish his throne in righteousness over all the earth, and all kings and all nations shall serve him. In the volume of the book, it was written, concerning the Lion of the tribe of Judah, "Lo! I come to do thy will, O God!" The unfolding of the hidden things contained in the sealed book of the Apocalypse, as well as the actual fulfilment of them, belonged wholly to him; by his Spirit they are now made manifest to us; and when the words of that book are explained, according to the Revelation of the little open book, which was ordained to be its companion,

the light from the two conjoined, shineth as from the sun of righteousness unto the perfect day, and as a clear light to direct the path, and to enlighten the understandings of God's people.

Previous to entering upon the particular examination of each seal, it seems desirable to state what appears to be the outline of these symbols. They will be found to present a general view of the progress of the gospel Church, from the first preaching of the gospel, till it enters into rest. The first seal represents the gospel going forth in its original purity: the second, third, and fourth, its subsequent corruption, and degeneracy: the fifth shews the preservation of the Church from the adversary: the sixth, its gathering from out of the nations which are destroyed: and the seventh, its millennial rest. The symbols are now to be examined with reference to this outline:—

Rev. vi. 1, 2.—“ And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four *beasts* (living creatures) saying, Come and see. And I saw, and behold a white horse, and he that sat on him had a bow: and a crown was given unto him, and he went forth conquering, and to conquer.”

Under this symbol is represented the gospel of Jesus Christ, going forth in its purity, and in the power of its Lord, conquering from the first, and ordained to

be victorious in the end, militant for a time in righteousness, appointed unto certain victory, which should cause peace for ever, bringing salvation to lost sinners—to a world sunk in wickedness and idolatry. The appearance of the horse and his rider has reference to the glorious person of Messiah described in Rev. xix. 11, but the descriptions contained in the two passages, manifestly do not belong to one and the same person. He who sat upon the horse had a bow, an instrument of ancient warfare, by which an enemy is wounded from afar, affording an apt illustration of the power of the preached word, in striking from a distance, and penetrating into the hearts of those to whom the Lord sends it. The rider was not crowned at first, but a crown was given unto him, which seems to denote what in the end shall come to pass, that although his kingly power was not in the first instance acknowledged, and the progress of its conquests might afterwards be interrupted, yet in due time he should prevail, and should establish his dominion over the earth.

Rev. vi. 3, 4:—And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature say, Come and see. And there went out another horse that was red, (*ρυγγος* fire coloured) and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another, and there was given unto him a great sword."

The second seal presents a horse of another charac-

ter, flame or fire-coloured, and it should seem as if the conquests of the white horse were, for a season, interrupted, or stayed by this, and the two other horses which succeed. The gospel which at first went forth in peace, in process of time produced "rather division." And it was found, as our Lord had said, that he came not to send peace, but a sword. As professing Christians departed from the simplicity that is in Christ, the word of truth created dissension, and controversy amongst them, and brought in eventually all the intolerance of persecution. The change did not rapidly supervene, but came on by slow degrees; and as the purity of the gospel declined, the colour of the fiery horse was developed. Towards the latter end of the second, and the beginning of the third century, the spirit of intolerance was manifested; but the perilous circumstances of the Church, still exposed to Pagan persecution, prevented its going forth into action, so as to attain any considerable height. As soon, however, as persecution ceased, upon the Roman Empire embracing Christianity, all the malignant feelings, which for a season had been repressed, came into full play; and the contest for worldly power and advantages, which prevailed in the outward Church, produced in process of time, between men who called themselves Christians, all those disgraceful scenes of fiery zeal, hatred, persecution,

and bloodshed, recorded by historians, which disgraced that era of the Church, and prepared the way for the darkness that followed.

Rev. vi. 5, 6.—“ And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, Come and see. And I beheld, and lo ! a black horse, and he that sat on him had a pair of balances (ζυγος a yoke) in his hand. And I heard a voice in the midst of the four living creatures say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny, and see thou hurt not the oil and wine.”

The third seal represents a black horse, whose rider has a yoke in his hand—not a pair of balances, as commentators seem generally agreed. See Parkhurst in Voc. ζυγος.—The colour denotes mourning and ignorance, and the yoke, the bondage of superstition : and truly such were the distinguishing characteristics of the times which then ensued. The outward Church became gradually more and more corrupt. Penances, fastings, vows of celibacy, and the austerity of the cloister, superseded the faith which was once delivered to the saints : and the jargon of long prayers in an unknown tongue, and the worship of saints, images, and relics, at length entirely destroyed the purity, and almost the appearance even of Christian worship. Pious frauds, lying wonders, and tales of mystery, were formed into a regular system of superstition ; and the reign of Priestcraft was established in full vigour with masses, confessions,


absolutions, prayers for the dead, and a long catalogue of the most odious absurdities, producing at length such thick darkness as might be felt. The voice from the midst of the four living creatures, proclaims the lamentable scarcity of the bread, and waters of life, which was ordained then to follow. The expression denotes that a *denarius*, a penny, which was the daily wages of a labourer, should not purchase for him more than a $\chiοινιξ$ of wheat, or three $\chiοινικες$ of barley, either of which were a short and scanty allowance of necessary food for an individual, being no more than that which the laws appointed for a slave : whereas, in times of plenty, the *denarius* would purchase sixteen or twenty $\chiοινικες$ of wheat.—See Parkhurst in Voc. $\chiοινιξ$. But the voice from the throne commands, that in the midst of all this darkness and famine, the wine and oil of the sanctuary shall be preserved in their genuine purity. And this has accordingly been seen : for amidst all the abominations, which ensued in these times, and in the ages of Papal darkness, no attempt was made to corrupt the original text of Scripture. They have proceeded no further than to obscure it by criticisms, commentaries, and annotations—to conceal it in an unknown tongue, and to keep it from the knowledge of the people, by prohibiting the common use of it in the several vernacular languages, su-

perinducing a "blackness of darkness" upon the nations of the earth.

Rev. vi. 7, 8.—" And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come and see. And I looked, and behold, a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was death, and hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the *wild* beasts of the earth."

Under the fourth seal, a pale horse is exhibited—deadly pale. See Parkhurst in Voc. *χαλκός*—Death sat upon him, and hell accompanied him. And they two had power given to them over the fourth part of the earth, to destroy with the four grievous judgments of God, spoken of by the prophet—the sword, the famine, the noisome beast, and the pestilence. Ezek. xiv. 21. What is intended by the fourth part of the earth, seems difficult to decide: perhaps Europe, the fourth quarter of the globe, may be signified, and the fulfilment may be so traced. By the two-fold figure of death and hell, the destruction of the souls and bodies of men seems intended. And in this way has the prophecy been fulfilled; for when the man of sin was established in all the fulness of his power, with signs and lying wonders, he came with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish: God sending them a strong delusion, that

they should believe a lie, and that all might be condemned, who believed not the truth. And these, having pleasure in unrighteousness, hated and despised the truth, and would not endure sound doctrine ; and, therefore, upon pretence of doing God a service, they persecuted with fire unto death, every one who, having the testimony of Jesus Christ, refused to partake of their unhallowed cup. Destroying their own souls, they destroyed the bodies of the saints also, filling the fourth part of the earth with desolation, with darkness, with slaughter, and with death.



CHAP. XV.

Prophecy of the Seven Seals concluded. Rev. vi. 9,
to viii. 1.

The four preceding seals have shewn us the gospel of Jesus Christ, first going forth in purity, but degenerating into the most unhallowed superstition. A tyranny was at length established over the lives and consciences of men, and the cruelties with which it was accompanied, exceed all that the world has witnessed. To profess the pure truths of the gospel, was, in those times, to be exposed to certain death : and the bloody tribunals erected for the punishment of those, whom the world called heretics, because they were not of the world, pursued, without fear or remorse, their work of destruction, till at length whole nations of Christian people were given up to slaughter, and all knowledge of gospel truth was well nigh driven from the earth.

The seals of the Apocalypse, have a regular division into two parts—first four, and then three ; and as the four first describe the degeneracy of the outward Church, the three last treat of the deliverance of the

true worshippers, even of those who worship in spirit and in truth, and who, as dear children, follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth.

The circumstances of the fifth seal are these :—

Rev. vi. 9, 10, 11.—And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar, the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held. And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood, on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them. And it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow-servants also, and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.”

The interpretation of this part of the prophecy, is a matter of considerable difficulty. The four first seals have been shewn to treat of “the Church upon earth, in the flesh : and it might seem to destroy the integrity of the type, if this seal were referred to the Church in any other state. It is, however, to be remembered, that the apostle was introduced into the heavenly mansions at the time when he saw the vision; and as the souls of those who suffered martyrdom for the truth, are spoken of in express terms, it may be doubted, whether commentators are to be justified in departing from the plain meaning of words, which in themselves are definite. Some, however, taking the passage figuratively, consider it as referring to the

era of the Reformation, when the poor scattered sheep of the pasture, towards the latter days of the great persecution, cried mightily unto the Lord, praying for deliverance, and that their enemies might be judged as he hath said ; and they think the white robes given to them, and the command to rest for a season, allude to the rest from persecution, which the Church obtained in that day, in the countries which emerged from Popery ; and also to the extension of Biblical knowledge, whereby the Lord's faithful people then attained unto a more full and perfect assurance of his truth, and of his promise unto them that love him. It seems doubtful, whether the words of the text can admit of this meaning ; and it is perhaps not unreasonable to believe, that here, as in some other parts of Scripture, the Lord, in speaking of things upon earth, is pleased to afford also a glimpse of heavenly things. In Christian times, the only altar is Christ. The souls, therefore, under the altar, who were slain for the word of God, must signify those martyrs, who sealed their testimony with their blood ; and who rest in Jesus, until the day when he shall be revealed in the clouds of heaven, coming with ten thousand of his saints, to establish his kingdom upon the earth. There is an objection, however, to this interpretation ; for the saints under the altar are represented as

crying unto the Lord, and receiving white robes at his hands; whereas the Scriptures generally represent the departed to remain in sleep.* If it be

* Without insisting upon the accuracy of the view, it may not be unprofitable to state generally the argument which is applied to it. From the word of truth we learn, that man consists of body, soul, and spirit: and Paul expressly speaks of a natural, and a spiritual body. Man's body is the outward flesh, or natural body; and the spiritual body, or soul, is that which shall arise from the dead, and which now dwelleth within the body of flesh. There is, moreover, a Spirit which quickeneth, giving immortality to the soul. Now the spirit which is in man cometh from above, or from beneath, for there are the children of God "born from above," John iii. 4—8. and there are the children of the devil "from beneath." John viii. 23, 41—47. With the children of these two great families, the whole earth is peopled.

It is written, that "the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul." Gen. ii. 7. And again, when "man goeth to his long home," "dust shall return to the earth as it was, and the spirit shall return to God who gave it." Eccles. xii. 5 and 7. The spirit thus returning unto God, the saints sleep in Jesus. 1 Thess. iv. 13, 14.—Absent from the body, they are present with the Lord. 2 Cor. v. 8.—And when they depart, they are with Christ, which is far better. Philip. i. 23.—For "they rest from their labours." Rev. xiv. 13.—And "their life is hid with Christ in God." Colos. iii. 3, 4.

Our Lord said unto the thief, "to day shalt thou be with me in paradise," Luke xxiii. 43.;—but neither from that, nor from any other scripture, is it to be discovered, that the saints after death, and until the morning of resurrection, enjoy any other thing, than a sweet and happy rest, such as the weary labourer partakes of when the toils of the day are ended.

In addition to these authorities, it will be found further—"Man lieth down, and riseth not: till the heavens be no more they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep." "If a man die, shall he live again? All the days of my appointed time will I wait till my change come." Job xiv. 12, 14.—"Return, O Lord, deliver my soul, O save

indeed a state of blessed sweet repose, in which the saints rest, until the morning of the resurrection, like unto the fondly cherished infants, who sleep in the mothers' bosom, fostered with tender care, and

me for thy mercies sake, for in death there is no remembrance of thee ; in the grave, who shall give thee thanks !" Psalm vi. 4, 5.—" Lord, I have called daily upon thee, I have stretched out my hands : wilt thou shew wonders to the dead ? Shall the dead arise and praise thee ? Selah ! shall thy loving kindness be declared in the grave, or thy faithfulness in destruction ? Shall thy wonders be known in the dark, and thy righteousness in the land of forgetfulness ?" Psalm lxxxviii. 9—12.—" The dead praise not the Lord, neither any that go down to the grave." Psalm cxv. 17.—" The grave cannot praise thee, death cannot celebrate thee ; they that go down to the grave cannot hope for thy truth." Isaiah xxxviii. 18.

These scriptures, when taken together, seem hardly to be reconciled with the opinion entertained by many, that when death takes place, the soul passes into a state of conscious existence, separate from the body ; and enters into the joy of its Lord, to pass the interval of time until the resurrection of the body, in a state of blessedness, and in praises, and in thanksgivings unto Him, who is the God of the spirits of all flesh. But there seems rather a plain declaration that when the spirit of life from God, returneth unto him, the soul is left in rest, and will so remain, until the resurrection, when the spirit from God shall again enter in to give it life, that it may rise again as a spiritual and immortal body. Thus, like the seed of corn, the natural body is sown in corruption ; but it is not quickened except it die, and fall to decay in the earth. When it has thus perished, God giveth a body as it pleaseth him, and it is raised up a spiritual body.

The parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus, appears to be a principal authority, from which is deduced the soul's separate state of conscious existence, between the time of death and the resurrection. But this parable, like the two others which precede it, treats of the rejection of the Jews, and calling of the Gentiles : and it may be very easily explained, without any reference whatever to the things of the resurrection. It cannot, therefore, be admitted as bearing strongly upon the present question, however it may seem otherwise at first sight.

guarded with parental watchfulness—they could hardly be represented as crying unto the Lord, and receiving white robes at his hand. But even in this view of the subject, the interpretation of the passage might remain the same; for, according to other Scriptures, *many* of those who have died in Christ, appear to have been already raised from the dead. It will be seen from Matthew xxvii. that when the Lord “yielded up the ghost, the earth did quake, and the rocks rent, and the graves were opened, and many bodies of the saints which slept, arose, and came out of the graves *after his resurrection*, and went into the holy city, and appeared to many.” These saints, having died before the coming of Christ in the flesh, can have been no others than they of whom the Apostle Paul speaks in Heb. xi. and xii. as being a cloud of witnesses, who compass about the saints of the gospel dispensation; and who, notwithstanding they have died in the faith, and have also risen from the dead, have not yet received the promise, God having provided some better thing for us of the gospel-day, that they, without us, should not be made perfect in glory. The apostle says of these saints, that they were they of whom the world was not worthy—that they wrought righteousness, and that they endured as seeing him who is invisible—that they had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings; yea, moreover of

bonds and imprisonments—that they were stoned, sawn asunder, tempted, and slain by the sword : and that, being destitute, afflicted, and tormented, they wandered about in sheeps'-skins and goats'-skins, in deserts, and mountains, and dens, and caves of the earth. When the Lord Jesus rose from the dead, these rose with him, as the first-fruits unto God and the Lamb. And when he shall come in glory, to raise his gospel saints, according to 1 Cor. xv. 51—54. (if the gospel saints do in point of fact still remain asleep in him,) these of the Old Testament dispensation, coming in the clouds of heaven, shall attend and minister unto him, as described in Dan. vii. 10. and Jude 14, 15.—In this view of the subject, the fifth seal might represent the risen saints of the Old Testament, beseeching the Lord to hasten his kingdom ; whereupon he clothes them with a change of raiment, as described by the prophet Zechariah iii. 4. according to the vision there related ; and he gives them the sweet assurance, that the saints who have been so long afflicted, shall at the appointed time be all glorified together, and that their persecutors shall be brought to judgment, in the day when the Son of Man cometh. And if also, on the other hand, the souls of the gospel martyrs be already in personal communion with the Lord, as many pious men believe, the passage may be

explained in a similar manner with reference to them; but, whatever may be the true interpretation of this mysterious portion of the Apocalypse, it is, perhaps, not too much to assert, that if it be of the kind which has been suggested, it is not to be expected that it should be generally understood and acknowledged, until the millennial dispensation shall arrive.

The relation of the sixth seal runs thus:—

Rev. vi. 12. "And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and lo! there was a great earthquake: and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood. And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig-tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. And the heaven departed as a scroll, when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every freeman, hid themselves in the dens, and in the rocks of the mountains, and said to the mountains and rocks; Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand?"

The events of this seal are future. It represents the great judgment upon the nations, which shall take place at the coming of Messiah. The sublimity of the language, the power of the imagery, and the majesty of the expressions used, forbid the idea of referring this symbol to any less important event, than that which the words

declare—" the great day of the wrath of the Lamb." The events of that day, and the signs by which it is preceded, will be considered in a future stage of this inquiry : for the present, it may be sufficient to remark, that there are here set forth the effects of that judgment, which shall fall upon the ungodly, when the Son of Man cometh with power and great glory, to take possession of his kingdom. The astonishment of all the dwellers upon earth, when they see the manifestation of his power, is described in awful terms ; the convulsions of nature strike their hearts with terror and amazement ; and they fly from before his face with a fearful looking for of fiery indignation ; seeking, if possible, that they may contrive to hide themselves from his presence.

The judgment, however, is not described in this part of the prophecy, nor does it take place immediately, for the Church must be first gathered from out of the nations. The righteous must be separated, and led into a place of safety ; and until this is accomplished, the judgments upon the ungodly are stayed, as the vision proceeds to shew.

Rev. vii. 1.—" And after these things, I saw four angels standing upon the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree. And I saw another

angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God; and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads. And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel"—that is, 12000 from each tribe, making 144,000, as described in verses 5 to 8.—Verse 9. "After this, I beheld, and lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and with palms in their hands, and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders, and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, saying, Amen: blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever, Amen. And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes, and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said unto me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb; therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

The striking feature of the foregoing passage is the blessing upon the elect of Israel. They, as the elder

brethren, have pre-eminence above the Gentiles. The Lord shall save the tents of Judah first. Zech. xii. 17.—They are called first unto their Messiah; and clothed with their spiritual bodies, they delight themselves in the presence of their King. The tribe of Dan, however, is not numbered. The word Dan signifies judgment, and it may perhaps seem as if this tribe were left for judgment, even as Judas from amongst the apostles was left. To the children of Israel thus collected together, succeed the countless multitude of the Gentiles, and united as one fold under one shepherd, they, the risen saints, together constitute the Millennial Church.

Rev. viii. 1.—“And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour.”

This silence represents the Church when she has entered into the joy of her Lord. He has led her into the banquetting house, and his banner over her is love. Her sun no more goes down, neither does her moon withdraw itself: for the Lord is become her everlasting light, and the days of her mourning are ended.

CHAP. XVI.

Prophecy of the Seven Trumpets—Four first Trumpets considered.—Rev. viii. 2—12.

The eighth chapter of the Apocalypse, introduces a third set of symbols, the seven trumpets. They commence with the second verse of that chapter, and end with the last verse of chapter xi. The trumpets describe the effects produced by the preached gospel of Jesus Christ, in the world which lieth in the wicked one; and the judgments falling upon the children of men for their opposition to the truth of God, and their systematic corruption of it. The trumpets, like the seals, divide themselves into four, and three; and the three last, inasmuch as they bring temporal judgments upon the inhabitants of the earth, are denominated woe-trumpets. It has been accurately remarked by a learned commentator, that the seventh trumpet most clearly announces the victory obtained by Christ and his Church, over the powers of hell and of anti-christ, and a corrupt world. If the seventh trumpet proclaims this victory, the former ones will doubtless treat of the previous warfare between the parties, or the connection of the symbols would be lost; and,

therefore, it cannot be the true interpretation of the four first trumpets, to refer them to the circumstances and the fortunes of the Roman empire, as many commentators have done. It may be remarked further, that under the four first trumpets, as under the four first seals, few particulars are exhibited ; so that the general outline they afford, may be adapted to the history of the Church's warfare, with *at least* as much facility, as to the affairs of the Roman empire. Considering then the trumpets as describing the contest, between the powers of light and darkness, the history of the witnesses of the light, ordained to stand up against the powers of darkness, becomes a natural feature in this series of symbols ; and it will be found accordingly in chapters x. and xi.

The trumpets are arranged as follows :—The four first relate the Church's warfare before the division of the Latin and Greek empires ; the fifth and sixth, the judgments upon the Greek empire ; the seventh, the victory and triumph of Messiah, and his Church. Between the sixth and seventh vials, the history of the witnesses is introduced ; and the Latin empire is not distinctly mentioned, as it belongs to the succeeding symbols.

Rev. viii. 2—6. “ And I saw the seven angels which stood before God ; and to them were given seven trumpets. And

another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censor; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar, which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense which came up with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand. And the angel took the censor, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth: and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake. And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets, prepared themselves to sound."

The object here presented, is the pure fire, taken immediately from off the altar of God, and cast into the earth; and it was fulfilled at the day of Pentecost; when the followers of the risen Saviour, being all with one accord in one place, were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. This soon produced a mighty revolution in spiritual things; the law having been fulfilled, passed away, and was succeeded by the everlasting gospel: salvation was no longer of the Jews, but of the Christians: and the apostles, being endued with power from on high, went forth, as they were commanded, to preach unto all the world; teaching all nations, and baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. The voices, thunderings, and lightnings may represent the first preaching of the gospel, which prepared the way for the things that were ordained to follow.

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Verse 7. "And the first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood; and they were cast upon the earth: and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up."

Under this symbol, is shewn the effect of the word of truth, when brought into conflict with the prejudices and passions of mankind. Instead of the dew and kindly rain which softens the earth, causing it to bring forth fruit and bud; the moisture, congealed into hail, descends with fire, mingled with blood—in allusion, perhaps, to the fire of persecution, and the blood of the martyrs of Jesus Christ. The effect is to destroy all, who, like the green grass, grew upon the surface of the Christian profession, without depth of root in the ground; together with a considerable portion of trees, which were not so firmly rooted, as to have power to resist the storm. Under this trumpet, many believed unto eternal life; of whom, numbers sealed their testimony with their blood; whilst others, fearful of persecution, or ensnared by the allurements around them, turned back, like Demas, unto the present evil world, preferring it before the cross of Christ; others, like Ananias and Sapphira, made a lying profession unto God; and others, like Simon the sorcerer, offered their money for the heavenly inheritance. The effect of all this, was to separate the chaff from the wheat, and to make manifest the power of the

Spirit of God in the church, amidst persecutions, and the falling away of many.

Verses 8 and 9: "And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea; and the third part of the sea became blood: and the third part of the creatures which were in the sea and had life, died; and the third part of the ships were destroyed."

The first trumpet has exhibited the warfare of the Church during the times of her persecution, and the second trumpet passes forward to her times of exaltation, representing her conflict amidst the many spiritual evils and corruptions by which she was assailed, as soon as the rulers of the state, having embraced Christianity, began to use their power in the propagation of what they termed the Christian religion. In the Apocalyptic symbols, mountains appear to denote temporal, and cities ecclesiastical authorities, powers, or communities: and under the second trumpet, the figure represents a great state, professing the gospel, cast into the sea—that is, amongst the mass of the people making no profession, and caring for none of these things. The effect was, that religion soon became a stepping-stone to preferment; riches and honour among men, attended those who gained importance in the Church; and the unhallowed, sanguinary struggle for power and for worldly gain, between carnal men exercising spiritual functions.

soon produced scenes of violence, of bloodshed, and of religious traffic, recorded by all historians, and well described by the symbol, as if one third part of the creatures died, and one third of the ships were destroyed.

Verses 10, 11. "And the third angel sounded, and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters: and the name of the star is called wormwood: and the third part of the waters became wormwood: and many men died of the waters because they were made bitter."

The third trumpet represents the Church contending with corruptions of doctrine. In Rev. i. a star is used as a symbol to represent the angel, or spiritual ruler of a Church. And here the apostate priesthood of the Church is represented as falling upon the waters of life, corrupting them, and making them bitter unto death, by the introduction of many abominations. Soon after the Roman empire professed Christianity, false doctrines were spread amongst the people, under authority of their civil and ecclesiastical rulers: and although the corruptions, perhaps, were not so great as in succeeding ages, the doctrines of human merit, and the worship of saints, of relics, and of images, were fully and almost generally established in the empire and its dependencies; and, under the sanction of bishops, mingled their deadly

poison with the waters of everlasting life, to the beggling of unstable souls; and the manifest overthrow of many.

Verse 12. "And the fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars, so as the third part of them was darkened; and the day shone not for the third part of it, and the night likewise."

The sun, moon, and stars of the gospel dispensation, may be considered as the New Testament, the Old Testament, and the preachers of righteousness. Under the fourth trumpet all these were darkened. Under a worldly-minded and apostate priesthood, the Scriptures were perverted and obscured by false glosses and commentaries. A long train of useless and idolatrous ceremonies, was invented to supersede the reading, and the preaching of the word of God. In the darkness which prevailed, few were left who knew the truth, as it is in Jesus; and those who ventured to proclaim it, were denounced and destroyed as heretics. The knowledge of the Scriptures was almost withdrawn from the people, and a general blindness and ignorance ensued, as if to prepare the way for those unhallowed scenes, which are described in the ensuing prophecies.

Of the four first trumpets it may be remarked, that

they describe judgments upon the land, the sea, the rivers and fountains of waters, and the heavenly luminaries ; so that the universe, or whole outward Church is affected, each part in its turn ; and it seems manifest, that no literal fulfilment of these symbols could have been designed. But adapting them to the warfare of the Church, according to the key of interpretation afforded by the seventh trumpet, a figurative fulfilment is shewn, which applies itself to the symbols with as much exactness, as any which commentators have pointed out, when adapting them to the affairs of the Roman Empire. The preceding sketch may not be perfectly accurate, and possibly the mind of the reader may suggest to him considerable improvements ; but this outline is given under a very firm conviction, that the usual interpretation is erroneous, and that the truth will be accurately ascertained, by following out the symbols upon a plan like that which has been laid down.

CHAP. XVII.

Prophecy of the Trumpets continued—Fifth and Sixth Trumpets considered.—Rev. viii. 13, and Rev. ix.

The three last trumpets are introduced with a notice, that they bring temporal judgments upon the earth: and this circumstance will confirm the opinion, that the four trumpets which precede, refer to judgments in *spiritual* things. The fifth and sixth trumpets occupy Chap. ix. of the Apocalypse, and the notice alluded to, closes Chap. viii.

Rev. viii. 13.—“ And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying, with a loud voice, Woe, wee, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth, by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound.”

Rev. ix. 1 to 12.—“ And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth, and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit; and he opened the bottomless pit; and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit. And there came out of the smoke, locusts upon the earth; and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power. And it was commanded them, that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads. And to them it was given that they should

not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months; and their torment was as the torment of a scorpion, when he striketh a man. And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them. And the shape of the locusts was like unto horses prepared unto battle, and on their heads were, as it were, crowns like gold, and their faces were as the faces of men. And they had hair as the hair of women; and their teeth were as the teeth of lions. And they had breast-plates, as it were breast-plates of iron; and the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots of many horses, running to battle. And they had tails like unto scorpions, and there were stings in their tails: and their power was to hurt men five months. And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name, in the Hebrew tongue, is Abaddon; but in the Greek tongue, hath his name Apollyon. One woe is past, and behold, there come two woes more hereafter.

The Apocalypse, like the book of Daniel, traces the history of the Church under the Greek Empire, before it enters into any particular detail of the Latin Church and Kingdom. And the ninth chapter of Revelations appears to run parallel with the eighth chapter of Daniel.

The star in verse 1, does not seem to be one which the apostle saw falling, but which had already fallen to the earth, (*περὶ τὴν γῆν*), and for any thing that appears to the contrary, it may be, and probably, it is the same star, the fall of which he observed, as before described in verse 16 of the

preceding chapter. It seems intended to represent an ecclesiastical establishment, which had fallen away from the true faith. The experience of modern, as of ancient times, demonstrates that darkness and superstition are the parents of infidelity; and the symbol here represents the progress, and effects of that infidelity, to which the multiplied idolatries of Christendom gave birth. The great Church establishments of the Christian countries, being sunk in idolatry and image worship, the impostor Mahomet came forth, proclaiming himself the prophet of the one true God; and assuming to himself in that capacity, the office of recalling the nations to what he alleged to be the only true faith. Infidelity is aptly symbolized as a bottomless pit; for it affords no resting place for the sole of the sinner's foot: and the figure represents the fallen angel, or ruler of an apostate Church, opening the pit of infidelity; inasmuch as his superstitions and corruptions of the truth, lead men to doubt and to disbelieve God's revelation. From this darkness and infidelity, sprang up the Mahometan locusts; and their commission was not to hurt the green herb, or the true Israel of God; but only those who, not having the seal of God in their foreheads, professed a spurious faith: and thus, in tracing the early Mahometan conquests, it will be found that they extended over those countries of

Asia, of Africa, and of Europe, which were most immersed in idolatry ; whilst Savoy, Piedmont, and the south of France, which remained most free from the general infection, were preserved from their violence. They were to hurt, and to torment, but not to kill ; and thus, although they harassed both the Greek and Latin empire, they were not permitted to destroy either.

The description of the locusts, adapts itself readily to the first followers of Mahomet. The locusts were like horses prepared unto battle ; and so the Arabians were great, as horsemen, and their cavalry was the strength of their armies. Crowns were on their heads, and so they over-ran and subdued, to a greater or less degree, many countries ; for Palestine, Syria, Armenia, the greater part of Asia Minor, Persia, India, and Egypt, and the islands and borders of the Mediterranean may be reckoned among their conquests. They had faces as the faces of men, and hairs as the hair of women ; and thus it is remarked, that they wore beards and whiskers as men, whilst their hair was long and flowing, and sometimes plaited after the manner of women. Like scorpions, they had stings in their tails ; and so the poisonous effect of their false religion was left behind them, in all countries to which their arms extended. The name of

their king, Apollyon—the destroyer, is another remarkable feature, and serves to identify them with the king spoken of in Dan. viii. who was ordained to “destroy wonderfully.” See page 81.

It is mentioned twice, that they should torment men for five months, being the length of time observed by naturalists, as the period for the yearly ravages of the locust, viz. from April to September. And so the Saracenic conquests were chiefly effected during the five summer months, and then they would retire for the winter. But if the five months are intended to mark a prophetical period of 150 years, viz. five months of thirty days each, the day signifying a year, it will be found that the chief exploits of the Saracens were accomplished within that space of time, viz. from 612, when Mahomet commenced his imposture, to 762, when the Caliph Almansor built Bagdad, where he fixed the seat of his empire, calling it, the city of peace. Thus the establishment of the power and religion of Mahomet in the east, was the fulfilment of the first woe trumpet, “and behold there come two woes more.”

Verses 13 to 21. “And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar, which is before God, saying, to the sixth angel which had the trumpet; Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates.

And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men. And the number of the army of the horsemen were two hundred thousand thousand : and I heard the number of them. And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breast-plates of fire, and of jacinth, and brimstone ; and the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions, and out of their mouths issued fire, and smoke, and brimstone. By these three, was the third part of men killed ; by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone, which issued out of their mouths. For their power is in their mouth, and in their tails : for their tails were like unto serpents, and had heads, and with them they do hurt. And the rest of the men, which were not killed by these plagues, yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood, which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk. Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts."

It is seen by comparing verse 12. with Rev. xi. 13. that a much greater length of time was to intervene between the first and the second, than between the second and the third woe. The plague of the Mahometan locusts was accordingly exhausted in about an hundred and fifty years ; and, for a very considerable period, they remained quiet in the countries in which they had established themselves ; and, contented with the peaceable occupation of them, they gave little serious disturbance to their Christian neighbours. But the remnant of the Greek church having at length filled up the measure of its abominations,

another scourge was appointed, as a judgment upon these transgressors. The command accordingly was given to loose the four messengers of wrath, who were bound at the great river Euphrates, *ἐν τῷ ποταμῷ*; and who were prepared for an appointed time, that is, for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year,—which, if calculated as a prophetical period, amounts to 391 years and 15 days. These messengers were not to torment like the locusts, but to slay, and to destroy the third part of men : and they were exemplified and fulfilled in the four Turkish Sultanies, which for many years were locked up and restrained within their own lands, on the other side of the river Euphrates, chiefly by reason of the crusades of the XIth. XIIth. and XIIIth. centuries. The crusaders abandoned their conquests in the latter part of the XIIIth. century, and then the four messengers or angels were loosed. In the year 1281, the Othman power, springing up from the four Turkish Sultanies, commenced its career of conquest over Christendom. The city of Kutahi fell first in that year, before the arms of Ostogrul, the father of Othman. In the year 1672, being 391 years afterwards, Cameniec was taken from the Poles, and forty-eight towns and villages belonging to its territory, were delivered up to the Sultan Mahommed the IVth. by the treaty of peace. And Prince Can-

temir, in his History of the Othman Empire, remarks, that this was the last victory by which any advantage accrued to that state, or any city or province was added to the ancient boundaries of the empire. The four messengers of wrath, like the Mahometan locusts, are described as being very powerful in horsemen. Such was the character of the Othman armies. The fire, jacinth, and brimstone which marked their breast-plates, may allude to the colours by which their standards, and their apparel were distinguished—scarlet, blue, and yellow. And the fire, smoke, and brimstone from out of their mouths, may *possibly* allude to the use of gunpowder, then first introduced in warfare ; and to their numerous train of artillery of enormous size, which was of peculiar service to them in their conquests. Their tails, like unto serpents, had heads with which they do hurt : and this feature again corresponds with the Mahometan locusts, and seems to allude to the false religion, which they every where imposed upon those whom they subbued ; for wherever their arms extended, there also must Mahometanism be established. But, although the Greek empire was thus brought to ruin, and her ecclesiastical power overthrown, the rest of men or Latin church, which was not destroyed by these plagues, was in no wise reclaimed from its

idolatries, and it will be seen, as the subject proceeds, that men still pursued their abominations, undisturbed by the awful lesson which was before their eyes; fulfilling the words of the prophecies, which are to be examined in the progress of this inquiry.



CHAP. XVIII.

Prophecy of the Trumpets continued—The Two Witnesses in Sackcloth.—Rev. x.

The tenth chapter of the Apocalypse proceeds to another subject, which is interwoven with the trumpets; and it introduces the two witnesses of God, ordained to stand up in sackcloth, to proclaim his truth before men during the times of Papal darkness. It has been already intimated at page 153, who these two witnesses are; and this will appear yet more plainly, by tracing the circumstances which are detailed.

Rev. x. 1—7. "And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud: and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was, as it were, the sun; and his feet as pillars of fire. And he had in his hand a little book, open: and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth, and cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth; and when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices. And when the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to write; and I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not. And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea, and upon the earth, lifted up his hand to heaven, and swore by him that liveth for ever and ever, who

created heaven, and the things that therein are ; and the earth, and the things that therein are ; and the sea, and the things that are therein ; that there should be time no longer ; but in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets."

The appearance of the mighty angel who descends with the little open book, agrees so nearly with the description of the glorious Messiah in Rev. i. 13—16. that it may be concluded, he is no other ; and the opinion is confirmed by Rev. iv. 3. from whence it may be collected that the rainbow (perhaps radiance or irradiation,) upon his head, is one of the signs of the presence of the Lord.

No explanation is given of the thunders, or of the things they uttered ; and the apostle is told that they are not to be made known. But he proceeds to record the oath of the mighty angel, who sware by the name of the Most High, that time shall be no more, and that the mystery of God shall be consummated in the days of the seventh angel, and when he shall begin to sound his trumpet. That mystery is the Revelation which God hath given, concerning the warfare of his Church, set forth, not only in the Apocalypse, but in the writings also of the prophets.

Verse 8—11. " And the voice which I heard from heaven, spake unto me again, and said, Go, and take the little book,


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which is open in the hand of the angel, which standeth upon the sea and upon the earth. And I went unto the angel, and said unto him, Give me the little book. And he said unto me, Take it, and eat it up; and it shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth, sweet as honey. And I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate it up. And it was in my mouth sweet as honey, and as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter. And he said unto me, Thou must prophesy again before many people, and nations, and tongues, and kings."

The apostle John is spoken of, as the disciple whom Jesus loved; and he was peculiarly favoured by his Master, in being appointed to receive this vision, and to record it for the instruction of the Church. When this vision was committed to writing, the canon of Scripture was finished; and the Book of the New Testament of the Lord Jesus Christ, being thus completed by the Apostle, the symbol aptly represents him, as receiving that Book of the Testimony from out of the hand of the angel of the everlasting covenant, that he might prophesy again before many peoples. The eating of the book denotes his receiving it into his heart, feeding upon it by faith, and finally digesting its contents, so as to become a living oracle of God. The words of it were sweet in his mouth, although, like Ezekiel, he became bitter in the spirit, for he denounced the judgments of God against many. And thus the unsearchable riches of Christ,

proclaimed unto a guilty world, though a savour of life unto life, have nevertheless been found, even as the Scriptures declare, a savour of death unto death.

It is the peculiar character of the little book, that it was delivered open ; not sealed, like the former book—not containing a revelation under types, and figures, and meats, and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed until the time of reformation, and having a shadow only of good things to come ; but it was itself an unfolding of the good things themselves, and of their very substance ; declaring openly, and freely and in plain words, such as all men might understand, that Jesus of Nazareth was the long-promised, and true, and only Saviour, even God manifest in the flesh : that he is the Lamb of God, ordained as a ransom for many : and that whoso believeth in him shall not perish, but hath everlasting life.



CHAP. XIX.

Prophecy of the Trumpets continued.—

The Two Witnesses in Sackcloth further considered.

Rev. xi. 1 to 6.

The written word of God, contained in the two books of the Old and New Testament, is, under the Spirit of God, the only certain and unerring testimony of his truth, which has been vouchsafed unto the children of men, during the dispensation of the gospel. These books were severally given, in the way of the Lord's appointment, unto his Church, under the law and under the gospel; and in the hands of the Spirit of God they remain unto this day, as the only standard, and the only revelation of his truth. They are the two visible witnesses upon the earth, whilst the invisible one, even the Holy Spirit, remains as the pure oil of light in the midst of them, and speaking by the mouth, and in the hearts of his servants, makes perfect the three-fold testimony. It is in, and by the word of God, that the Spirit of God bears witness, bringing that word into the hearts of God's people: and this enlightening unction from the Holy

One is the true anointing oil, of which the oil poured upon Aaron was the type: and thus the two books of testimony, one ordained for the Mosaic, and the other for the gospel day, pour forth continually the true anointing oil upon the Church. And hence it is, that these books of testimony are described in the passage which is about to be considered, as the two olive trees, the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth; and that they are also called by the prophet Zechariah, the two anointed ones, (or sons of oil—*margin*) the two olive trees, or olive branches, upon the right side of the candlestick, and upon the left side thereof, which, through the two golden pipes, communicating with the candlestick in the middle, empty from thence the golden oil out of themselves.

The power and the commission of these witnesses, corresponds with that, which was given unto the prophets of old, for the purposes of their ministry. Elijah the Tishbite, according to the power given unto him, called down fire from heaven upon his enemies. And so the Apocalyptic witnesses—for “fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies; and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed.” “Elijah was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain; and it rained not again upon the

earth by the space of three years and six months."— So these witnesses have "power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy." Aaron took his rod, and stretched forth his hand upon the waters of Egypt, and they became blood.—These witnesses also have power over waters, to turn them into blood. Moses and Aaron smote the land of Egypt with divers plagues—and so these witnesses have power to smite the earth with plagues, as often as they will.

When Ezekiel declared the vision concerning the destruction of the city, (Ezek. ix.) he is said (Ezek. xliii. 3.) to have come to "destroy the city." Jeremiah is said to have been set over the nations, to root out, to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build, and to plant; because he was ordained to prophesy of such things. And further, the Lord said to Jeremiah; "I will make my words in thy mouth fire, and this people wood, and it shall devour them." And thus, likewise, the Apocalyptic witnesses are described, as actually doing the things of which they prophesy: and as they declare the destruction of their enemies, and the time and the circumstances of that destruction; they are said to destroy their enemies by the fire which proceedeth out of their mouth. No other witnesses which have been seen upon the face of

the earth, during the gospel days, have ever yet exercised powers of this description.

The eleventh chapter of Revelations gives the history of the witnesses in sackcloth.

Rev. xi. 1—6. "And there was given me a reed, like unto unto a rod; and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein. But the court which is without the temple, leave out; measure it not, for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city they shall tread under foot, forty and two months. And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days clothed in sackcloth. These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth. And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed. These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy, and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will."

The two first verses intimate that a distinction should be made manifest, between the true worshippers of the Lord, who draw nigh unto him in spirit and in truth; and those who, as nominal Christians, make a mere outward profession of the Christian religion. Thus the apostle was commanded to measure, or take an account of the temple, and of the altar, and of them that worship therein; whilst the outward court, or the forms of Christianity, should

be given to the Gentiles to walk therein, that they might tread the holy city (or the true and spiritual worshippers) under foot, for forty and two prophetic months, making 1260 years. For a like space of time, viz. for one thousand two hundred and threescore prophetic days, (signifying years) the two witnesses are ordained to prophesy, *clothed in sackcloth*. They had already prophesied from the beginning, but during the 1260 years they were to be in sackcloth; and according to v. 6, heaven was to be shut, so that no rain could descend on the thirsty land. The rain seems intended here to represent the kindly influences of the Spirit of God, through which alone the land of religious profession is made fruitful; and it has accordingly been found, that during the reign of popery, and in the countries where it has prevailed, those influences, for the most part, have been withheld; and the prophesying of the witnesses, such as it was, has been attended with very little effect.

The clothing of the witnesses in sackcloth, may well represent the Scriptures, kept from the hands, and from the knowledge of the people, and veiled in an unknown tongue. And it is a very extraordinary circumstance, that within about fifty years from the edict of Justinian (A. D. 529,) the Latin tongue became a dead language, notwithstanding

which, public worship has been always continued in Latin, throughout the papal countries ; so that the only portions of Scripture, which were presented to the people, in the worship and formularies of their church, have been in a language which few could understand. Knowing the word of God to bear witness against their ways; the Roman hierarchy concealed it from the people ; till at length the Bible was unheeded and unknown. The priests and the learned might refer to it, but no gospel was preached unto the poor ; and if, at any time, the Scriptures were entrusted to the laity in their vernacular tongue, they were accompanied by the false glosses of the popish doctors, to obscure and to pervert their meaning ; whilst the idolatrous and superstitious ceremonies of the Church, led their minds more and more away from the blood of the Lamb ; till every ray of gospel light was well nigh excluded from the land. The forty and two months, during which the outward court is given to the Gentiles, and the 1260 years of the witnesses prophesying in sackcloth, are one and the same period ; and these may be " the times of the Gentiles," mentioned in other parts of Scripture, because, then, the Gentiles tread the Holy City under foot. And they are, further, the times of the prevalence of the little horn of Dan. vii. against the saints ; and also the times of the king spoken of in Dan. xi. who mag-

nifies himself above every God ; (See Dan. xii. 7.) and this period is no other than the 1260 years, beginning with the decree of Justinian, and ending with the French Revolution, if the scheme before given be correct.



CHAP. XX.

Prophecy of Trumpets concluded—Death and Resurrection of the Two Witnesses—Seventh Trumpet.

Rev. xi. 7 to 19.

Rev. xi. 7 to 12.—“ And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them. And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified. And they of the people, and kindreds, and tongues, and nations, shall see their dead bodies three days and a half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves. And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another, because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth. And after three days and a half, the spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them. And they heard a great voice from heaven, saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them.”

Assuming that the time of the witnesses prophesying in sackcloth expired in the year 1789, it remains now to trace their death and their resurrection. The wild beast from out of the bottomless pit was to make war against them, and to overcome them, and to kill

them, after they had finished their testimony in sack-cloth. This wild beast has not been spoken of before, but, as he is again mentioned more particularly in Rev. xvii. it may be more convenient to consider his distinguishing characteristics, in the commentary upon that chapter. The symbol of the bottomless pit has already been explained at page 185, and it is enough to remark here, that the wild beast, according to this feature of the type, must be an atheistical or infidel power; and that, like the king of the Mahometan locusts, he is to be known by his deliberate and public rejection of the Christian religion. An infidel power, which answers this description, has been exhibited by revolutionary France: and, moreover, that kingdom is a broad street of the great Roman city, within the limits of whose territorial empire, the Lord Jesus in afore-time was crucified. Soon after the commencement of the French Revolution, the spirit of infidelity went forth with great power. It should seem as if the idolatries of Popery, and the mummeries of their masses and their image-worship, produced effects of the same description in the latter end of the eighteenth, as in the beginning of the seventh century, when they gave birth to Mahometanism. In these later times, as before, they brought discredit upon the whole Christian revelation; and thus, the French nation, when it threw off the superstitions of Popery,

running into the opposite extreme, threw off Christianity altogether. In the progress of these transactions, the Churches were shut, and in many places they were pulled down and destroyed: in the latter end of 1793, the keeping of the Sabbath was abolished, and the tenth day was appointed instead of the seventh for a day of rest. All semblance of Christian worship was forbidden, and a profane worship was substituted, in which praise was ascribed, and incense burnt to the human virtues; to reason, and to the memory of departed infidels, who were called the benefactors of mankind.* The two witnesses of God were thus slain by the wild beast of infidelity, that is, by atheistical and revolutionary France, which kingdom is well described as a street, or broad way in the great city of Babylon. Before this time, the witnesses had prophesied in mourning and in bondage; but at length

* "By an edict of the Constituent Assembly, there was a general sale of all ecclesiastical property, and every kind of property connected with churches or charities was confiscated. The magnificent church of St. Genevieve at Paris, was changed by the National Assembly into a repository for the remains of their dead men, or rather into a Regan temple; and as such was aptly distinguished by the name of the Pantheon, with the inscription, 'Aux Grands Hommes, la Patrie reconnoissante,' on the front, according to a proposed decree by the impious Condorpet. To this temple the remains of Voltaire and of Rousseau were conveyed, in solemn and magnificent procession. The bones of Voltaire were placed upon the high altar, and incense was offered; and the infatuated multitude bowed down before the relics of this arch-enemy to Christ, in silent adoration."—*History the Interpreter of Prophecy*, by Henry Kett, B. D. 1799. Vol. ii. p. 232.

they were put to death—they were killed—they were not allowed to remain as witnesses, bearing testimony any longer. But their bodies were not consigned to the grave, so that their remembrance, and their name should perish from off the land. The Books of God's Testimony were not destroyed, but remained still with the people, and at the expiration of three years and a half, or three and an half prophetic days, they were allowed once more to be seen, and to speak in the churches, in the forms of Christian worship. The atheists and infidels of the day vainly hoped that they had accomplished their purpose, and they congratulated each other on the victory, which reason had obtained over what they termed superstition; but in the beginning of the year 1797, a change gradually took place. The rulers of France began to think it might tend to make the land quiet, if Christian worship were allowed; and, in the spring of that year, a committee was appointed to revise the laws relating to public worship, and to its ministers. This produced an immediate toleration; the laws against the priests were soon annulled, and by a decree of the 15th of July in that year, they were exempted from the restrictions which had been imposed upon them; and they were required merely to promise submission to the government of the French republic. From that time Christian worship

was publicly re-established, and the two witnesses having revived, stood upon their feet as witnesses, in the same manner as before.

But the day was at hand, when these two witnesses were to assume a more exalted station. They were no longer to remain in sackcloth, and upon the earth, but their voice was to fill the heavens, and they were commanded to ascend thither; which has been most wonderfully fulfilled. The horrors which infidelity had brought upon the fairest portion of Europe, had filled the minds of many with wonder and astonishment, and advocates were raised up to defend the cause of truth, and to stem the torrent of atheism. The Lord having been pleased to bless these labours unto many, with a gracious outpouring of his spirit, the knowledge of vital godliness and the profession of it, in due time gradually extended itself; a higher tone of moral and of religious feeling was at length assumed, both in the press and in the pulpit of Protestant countries; a stimulus was given to Missionary efforts: and reference to the events of the last five-and-twenty or thirty years, will demonstrate a very general extension, both of religious knowledge and of practical piety in Great Britain, and in other places not subject to Popery. Soon after the peace of Amiens, that most extraordinary of all modern won-

ders, the British and Foreign Bible Society, was called forth into action. Formed at first by a few obscure individuals, for the purpose of distributing the Scriptures without note or comment; it rose gradually from very small beginnings into a sphere of vast importance; and extended its power and its usefulness, until, in the course of about fifteen years, it has acquired an annual revenue of £100,000, has distributed more than 2,000,000 copies of the Scriptures, and has printed them (either wholly or in part) in nearly 100 different languages and dialects: so that unless its progress should be arrested, it will require but a few years more, to send the sacred oracles to every people and nation of the earth in the vernacular tongues: whilst at the same time, Missionary Societies have been sending forth preachers continually; and societies have been formed in every quarter of the globe for the instruction of the people; and to enable them to read, and understand the word of life thus placed in their hands. A more accurate fulfilment of the type, which represents the witnesses, as ascending up to heaven in a cloud, and filling the heavens with their voice, cannot well be imagined. This effect has been to arrest the attention of many; and the enemies of vital religion continue to behold these things, with apprehension, lest their systems should be overthrown.

But at the same season with the death, and the resurrection of the witnesses, another great event takes place, which is thus related in the book of the prophecy :—

Verse 13. “ And the same hour there was a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand ; (names of men, margin.) And the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven.”

This earthquake is the French Revolution. It is announced as the fore-runner of a far greater earthquake, which shall follow it : and three peculiar features are pointed out, that we may be enabled to understand the sign. A tenth part of the mystic Babylon falls ; seven thousand names of men are slain ; and the remnant, according to the election of grace, seeing the Lord's hand in the judgment, are filled with fear, and give glory to his name.

This portion of the prophecy has also been accurately fulfilled, by the circumstances which took place at the French Revolution. France, one of the ten kingdoms of the mystic Babylon, fell from its estate : its kingly government was overthrown. The orders, or titles of nobility, both spiritual and temporal, were abolished in that country ; which is, indeed, the only way in which the names of men can be slain : and the number of titles so abolished was, as Mr. Faber

observes, exactly seven: 1. Prince;—2. Duke;—3. Marquis;—4. Count;—5. Viscount;—6. Bishop;—7. Baron. This tremendous revolution produced also an immediate sensation throughout Protestant countries. For, with almost one consent, it was acknowledged to be a judgment upon the mystic Babylon: from that time to the present, every commentator upon prophecy has referred to it in that view; and the attention of Christian people has ever since, continually been excited to watch the signs of the times, in reference to the expected fall of Babylon; giving glory to the Lord for making his judgments manifest. The earthquake of this revolution has, however, at length subsided, after afflicting the countries of Europe more than thirty years: and those who form their opinions according to the judgment of man's wisdom, rather than upon the word of God, have of late inclined to believe, that peace on earth was established upon a firm and sure basis, so that it might continue for a length of time. The word of prophecy by no means favours this opinion; for the second woe being past, it is written, (v. 14.) "Behold, the third woe cometh quickly." That woe consummates the mystery of God, (see Rev. x. 7.) in the manifestation of the kingdom of Messiah; and it is thus related in the text:—

Verses 15 to 19.—“ And the seventh angel sounded, and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever. And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God, saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned. And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged; and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants, the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth. And the temple of God was opened in heaven; and there was seen in his temple the ark of his covenant: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail.”

The contents of the last woe, or seventh trumpet, have been already spoken of, for they are the same as those of the sixth seal. It is only necessary to add, that under this trumpet the Kingdom of Messiah is made manifest, and is established in the sight of all men. The judgment of the nations, the first resurrection, the reward of the Lord's people, and the voices, the lightnings, the thunderings, the earthquake, and the great hail, which form the chief events of this trumpet, introduce Messiah's reign. The times of the present generation seem to have reached the awful interval, which precedes the last woe. How soon that woe may overtake us, it is not

for man to say ; but observing, that if the scheme already given be correct, the prophetical period of thirty years from the French Revolution is now elapsed ; making 1290 years from the giving of the saints into the hands of the little horn to destroy them : And seeing also that the present day is marked by pestilence, and by a feverish spirit of an infidel and revolutionary cast, which has not only extended itself over our own land, but also throughout the other countries of the world, it cannot be unprofitable to repeat our Lord's admonition, and to say unto all the dwellers upon earth, " Watch."

CHAP. XXI.

The Woman and the Red Dragon.—War between Michael and the Old Serpent.—Rev. xii.

The next series of symbols embraces the xiith. xiiith. and xivth. chapters of Revelations; and it contains the history of the great latter-day persecution of the saints. The visible Church is here shewn in the brightness of her apostolic purity, under the similitude of a glorious woman, flying from before the face of the evil one. And she goes into the wilderness, where she is fed or nourished by the hand of man for the appointed period of 1260 years, during which time, her enemy turns his persecuting hand against her seed; that is, against those, who, under the teaching of the Spirit of God, are led forward through the forms and ordinances of the outward Church, to discern; and to embrace the truth as it is in Jesus.

Rev. xii. 1 to 6.—“ And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; (or sign, margin) a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars. And she being with child, cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered. And there appeared another wonder (or sign) in heaven; and, behold, a great Red Dragon, having seven heads, and ten horns, and seven crowns upon

his heads: and his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman, which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born. And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up to God, and to his throne. And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there, a thousand two hundred and three score days."

The prophet Daniel has represented the fourth monarchy of the earth, and the dominion which it exercises, under various symbols, which agree, and to a certain extent run parallel with those of the book of Revelations.—1st. As the legs and feet of the great image: Dan. ii.—2ndly, As the fourth wild beast of the earth, and the little horn of that beast: Dan. vii.—And, 3rdly, As the King who exalts himself above every God: Dan. xi. The Apocalypsee agrees with Daniel, and speaks of the Roman power, first, as a *dragon*, having seven heads and ten horns:—and, again, as a *wild beast*, with seven heads and ten horns, arising out of the sea, and having another beast with two horns like a lamb, associated with him: Rev. xiii.—and, thirdly, as a wild beast with seven heads and ten horns, which arises from out of the bottomless pit: Rev. xvii. The marks ascribed to this seven-headed and ten-horned monster, in the different passages where he is spoken of, define with

singular accuracy the different forms and circumstances of government, under which the Roman power should subsist at different periods of the world.

In the passage which has been last recited, the great red dragon, a fabulous creature of antiquity, marks the ancient Pagan government. The dragon is seen in heaven, by which may be understood, the gospel dispensation; for the expressions, "heaven," "kingdom of heaven," and "kingdom of God," are frequently used in this sense in different parts of Scripture: and it was, perhaps, intended thus to signify, that the dragon, or Pagan Rome, should be brought to profess Christianity. The seven heads of the dragon, with crowns thereon, denote the seven different forms, under which ancient Rome exercised the powers of government; being ruled over alternately by kings, consuls, dictators, decemviri, military tribunes, triumviri, and emperors. Under the imperial head, it assumed the Christian profession in the time of Constantine; and then in this, its last form of government, which is probably signified by *its tail*, it drew the third part—a very large proportion of the stars of heaven, that is, of the pastors and ministers of the gospel; seducing them into worldly compliances, by temptations of worldly gain; bringing them from a spiritual to a

carnal profession, and so casting them to the earth. The horns of the Roman dragon are uncrowned, denoting their power to be future, for they did not rule as kings, until a later period.

The symbols, taken together, as they are related, represent the early persecutions of the Church by ancient Rome. The woman is the Church clothed with the Sun of righteousness, which is the word of God, and having the moon or lesser light of the Mosaic dispensation under her feet; and she is crowned with twelve stars—the twelve apostles of the Lamb. Pagan Rome stood ready to devour her spiritual seed, as soon as it was brought forth into the world, and employed itself for a season in cutting off every one whose profession of Christianity was discovered. The Church, however, brought forth a seed, which, by faith obtained the victory over the world, and over the flesh, and over Satan—a seed, which, at the latter day, shall sit with Christ “in his throne, even as he is set down with his Father in his throne,” Rev. iii. 21: and “shall rule the nations with a rod of iron,” Rev. ii. 26.—That seed, for the most part, as soon as it was manifested in the world, by professing the name of Jesus, was seized upon by the Roman power, and put to death in the flesh; but their spirits have ascended unto God, and they shall

join the triumphant throng, when the Lord Jesus cometh in the latter day, "with ten thousand of his saints," to take vengeance on his enemies. The woman being at length worn out by the persecution, availed herself of the two wings (the eastern and western branches) of the great Roman eagle, and sought protection amongst the rulers of the nations, who were prepared of God to receive her, having been brought to embrace Christianity. This is her flight into the wilderness, where she is corrupted, and remains 1260 years—and it is well described as a wilderness, being a dry and thirsty land, destitute of the water, and of the bread of life; for there was no outpouring of the Spirit, and the use of the Scriptures was forbidden. It is curious to remark, further, that as the carrying away of Judah into Babylon for 70 years, has a typical reference to these things of the gospel day; so, the time the gospel Church remains in the wilderness, is eighteen times seventy years—eighteen being the numerical amount of the three units which give the number of the beast—6, 6, 6.—During her abode in the wilderness, the outward Church is sustained, fed, nourished, and upheld by the hand of human authority, and by all the wise and prudent of this world; and she remains so unto this day; but the time draweth nigh when she shall again shine forth as the glorious bride of the Lamb

of God, "not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing," and shall beaten: "coming up from the wilderness, leaning on her beloved;" Cant. viii 8.

Rev. xii. 7—17. "And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the Dragon; and the Dragon fought, and his angels, and prevailed not, neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the Great Dragon was cast out, that Old Serpent, called the Devil and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world; he was cast into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ; for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. And they overcame him by the Blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death. Therefore, rejoice ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the seas; for the Devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time. And when the Dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child. And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the Serpent. And the Serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood, after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood. And the earth helped the woman: and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the Dragon cast out of his mouth. And the Dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ."

The Dragon spoken of in these verses, is not the Great Red Dragon of verse 8; for verse 9, shews it to be the Old Serpent, called the Devil and Satan, the accuser and the adversary of mankind. The symbol here returns back to the first going forth of the gospel, and under the war between Michael and Satan, represents the conflict between the powers of light and darkness, within the early apostolic Church. Being unable to destroy the spiritual seed, which sprang up again as fast as it was cut off, it became the next object of the great enemy, to pervert the revelation of the gospel, and to corrupt the disciples from the simplicity that is in Christ. This was to be done by the introduction of false teachers; and hence the Apostle Paul speaks of Satan being transformed into an angel of light; and of his ministers as false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ, but shewing themselves the ministers of unrighteousness. So the children of the evil one professed the faith of Jesus Christ, and intermixed themselves with the early converts, that they might preach another gospel; and sacred history informs us, that grievous wolves entered into the fold, not sparing the flock, and men calling themselves disciples spake perverse things, drawing away others after them. To counteract this evil, the discernment of

spirits was vouchsafed unto the apostolic Church; and it being thereby made manifest from whence these deceivers came, they were in many instances cast out from amongst the brethren. This gift, however, like the others, passed away at the appointed season.

When the gospel first went forth, the disciples being few in number, a large proportion of the individuals, who professed the gospel, became the objects of heathen persecution. But when they formed themselves into churches and congregations, the bishops, pastors, teachers and elders, were more particularly sought out, as being the chief supporters and principal leaders of the new sect; and the persecutors endeavoured, as far as in them lay, to destroy the associations of Christians, and all establishments of that description. In the mean time, the children of the evil one discovered, that the profession of a religion, which brought disgrace and every temporal calamity, was little suited to their inclination and their circumstances, and many apostatized from the faith; whilst others took their stand upon a lower ground, corrupting the forms and doctrines of the outward Church; and seeking to avoid the danger of persecution, by making a low and carnal profession of Christianity, such as should not be offensive to their heathen neighbours. In this way, and by slow de-

grees, they obtained individual toleration ; and outward Christianity gained ground, till at length, the being suspected, and even-known as a Christian, no longer brought peril of life or property, if the party were not zealous over-much. In this way the outward Church extended itself, and became more and more assimilated to the world ; and in process of time, the chiefs of the Roman Empire, and the leading authorities of the earth embracing Christianity, it became the established religion ; and the Church and the world were one. When this was brought to pass, the enemy attempted to overwhelm the woman with a flood of error, superstition, and idolatry ; but the Church remained uninjured—for the earthly and carnal professors of Christianity drank up these poisonous waters, which came from out of the dragon's mouth, whilst the true seed remained uninjured. Foiled in this attempt, the dragon turned himself, in great wrath, to make war against the remnant of the seed. He had no longer any inducement to attack the outward Church, which having become one with the world, was fully embued with every earthly and carnal principle. So long as riches, and honour, and power, and worldly gain, remained a portion for professors of the gospel, Satan had nothing to fear from them, or from the gospel they might preach ; and therefore he went forth to persecute his true enemies,

the remnant according to the election of grace, even those who kept the commandments of God, and bare the faithful testimony of Jesus Christ. And as these men, by their lives and conversation, reprov'd the evil generation amongst whom they sojourn'd, they were speedily denounc'd as heretics and schismatics, and as the enemies both of God and man.

And thus it was that the remnant of the elect, who were preserved in the midst of a corrupt and wicked generation, were distinguished from the rest of the people, and were called the remnant of the elect. And as these men, by their lives and conversation, reprov'd the evil generation amongst whom they sojourn'd, they were speedily denounc'd as heretics and schismatics, and as the enemies both of God and man.

CHAP. XXII.

*The Wild Beast of the Sea, and the Wild Beast with
two Horns, like a Lamb.—Rev. xiii.*

Rev. xiii. 1 to 10.—“ And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy : and the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion ; and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority. And I saw one of his heads, as it were, wounded to death ; and his deadly wound was healed : and all the world wondered after the beast. And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast : and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast ? Who is able to make war with him ? And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies : and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months. And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven. And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them ; and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations. And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. If any man have an ear, let him hear. He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity : he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.”

The ocean may well represent the troubled state of the nations, upon the dissolution of the western empire, in the time of Momyllus Augustulus, A. D. 476. And from the midst of that confusion, a new Roman power emerged. Like the dragon of the preceding chapter, the wild beast has seven heads, and ten horns; and it exhibits the western, or Latin empire, under a new character. The seven heads are not crowned, for the power of government no longer rests with them: but it is placed upon the ten horns, which are crowned; and thus the power of the state has remained with the several kings of the ten kingdoms: for the imperial head, when restored, though it became to a certain extent paramount over the ten kingdoms, yet it never exercised the powers of civil government, except within its own particular state. The heads of the wild beast may, for the present, be considered the same as those of the dragon, and it was perhaps intended, thus to mark the connection between them. The wild beast, as of himself, has not seven heads, neither has the dragon, as of himself, the ten horns; but under this part of the symbol, what belongs to the one, is exhibited as belonging to the other also, to signify that they are the same power under different modifications.

The imperial head is described as being wounded

to death ; and it was thus wounded by the sword
 the barbarians, who over-ran the western empire.
 process of time that deadly wound was healed, and
 Charlemagne was crowned Emperor of the West. Then
 did the imperial head resume its station amongst the
 nations ; and it became, a second time, the supporter
 of the corrupt Roman Church. The heads have been
 already described ; and upon them was the name of
 blasphemy, for they all belonged to a Pagan power.
 And the imperial head, when its wound was healed,
 took upon itself, for the second time, the name of
 blasphemy, assuming the title of the HOLY Roman
 Empire ; a title which belongs only to God. The ten
 horns have been already explained in pp. 68 and 69 ;
 and as it is not necessary to recapitulate, we may pass
 forward to the particulars which remain.

The wild beast was like unto a leopard, and his
 feet as those of a bear ; alluding, perhaps, to the
 rapidity of his conquests under Charlemagne, and to
 his characteristic treachery and cruelty in all his deal-
 ings towards the saints. The mouth, as of a lion,
 speaking great things and blasphemies, has been seen
 in all his public acts, assuming himself to be the
 chief of the nations, and the peculiar favourite of
 heaven.

His power, his seat of empire, and his great authority among the nations, were derived originally from the dragon, or Pagan Rome, as declared in the prophecy : and the high state to which he has been exalted, is described, by " all the world wondering after the beast, and worshipping him." This has been fulfilled, partly, in reference to his temporal sway ; but it has had also a further fulfilment. For the Catholic nations not only placed themselves in a sort of voluntary subordination to the empire, as a great leading power of the earth ; but they looked with peculiar reverence towards it, as a holy power ordained of God, and as the chief supporter, and the first-born Son of the Holy Catholic Church ; nor, for a long season, was its authority, in this respect, denied by any but those who, under the teaching of the Spirit, turned away from earthly rudiments, having their names written in the book of life. The wild beast opened his mouth in blasphemies against God, and against his name, and against his tabernacle, and against them that dwelt in heaven. And so, this Roman power has continually used its authority, to put down the revealed truths of the gospel, declaring them to be falsehoods and blasphemies : he has, further, blasphemed THE NAME, by placing Jesus below the virgin, and upon a level with saints and martyrs. And he has again blasphemed his tabernacle, by prom

biting and denouncing as heretical, all assemblies and congregations of those, who are true followers of the Lamb. And he has, further, blasphemed those who dwell in heaven, or those, who have entered into a clearer knowledge and enjoyment of spiritual things, by proclaiming them for heretics, children of the evil one, and men unfit to live.

The power of this ten-kingdomed empire was to continue for forty-two prophetic months, or 1260 years: for this time only, was it given to him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them. He pursued this warfare successfully, from the times of Justinian to the year 1789; since which period, we do not hear of the burning of heretics, or of the delivering up of nations to the sword, because they reject Popish superstitions. Like the little horn, and the blasphemous king of Daniel, which to a certain extent indeed, are identified with the beast, this power shall meet its end, which, according to verse 10, shall be by the sword, and by captivity, according to the evils which he hath himself brought upon others.

Verses 11—18. "And I beheld another wild beast coming up out of the earth, and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon. And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them that

dwell therein, to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, and deceiveth them that dwell on the earth, by means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast ; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast which had the wound by a sword, and did live. And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed. And he caused all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads : and that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast : for it is the number of a man. And his number was six hundred threescore and six."

The second wild beast mentioned in the preceding verses, is intimately connected with the first : and it exhibits the ecclesiastical power arising from out of the earth, or from out of a carnal and worldly profession of christianity, connecting itself with the civil power of the ten kingdoms, gaining the ascendancy over it ; and converting the civil power of the state into an instrument of oppression and persecution, against all those who would not submit themselves to its creed. This wild beast has horns like a lamb : he professes to be a minister of the gospel of peace : he speaks like a dragon ; for he proclaims idolatry :

like a Pagan power, setting up the worship of images and of strange gods ; (see p. 104.) and he blasphemes, and curses, and destroys the true followers of the Lamb. Availing himself of the temporal authorities, he causes all who yield to his dominion, to pay homage to the holy Roman empire. He gains credit by pretended miracles, which are done before the face of the first beast, or under sanction of the civil power ; and in these miracles, he pretends that the hand and the power of God is manifested, as was the fire that came down from heaven, according to the prayer of the prophet. He sets up an image, or likeness to the first beast, which image he calls The Holy Roman-Catholic Church. He declares that church to be infallible, and assumes the like infallibility to himself, also, as the sovereign Pontiff of the church ; and declares both himself and the church to be proper objects for religious veneration and worship ; denouncing as heretics all who do not implicitly submit to the decrees, and the guidance of that church ; and delivering them over to the civil power, that they may be put to death as the common disturbers of mankind. The mark which he causes all men to receive, is considered by some commentators to be the cross ; it being one peculiarity of his worship, that his followers continually cross themselves. They who refuse his mark, are excommunicated ; and with such

no man may buy, or sell, nor is any one allowed to minister unto them in the common offices of humanity. The prohibition to buy and sell, refers probably to spiritual things; for none but those whom he ordains, are allowed to minister in the offices of religious worship. The name of the beast, and the number of his name, which is the number of a man, are also mentioned as circumstances by which he shall be known; and it is declared to be the privilege of true wisdom, rightly to understand these things. The name, according to Mr. Clarke, is *H Λατυνα Βασιλειαν*, The Latin Kingdom, which contains numerical letters amounting to 666; and is, moreover, the peculiar name of the western empire. According to others the name is *Λατινος*, which contains numerals of equal amount,—*Latinus*, being the first king of the Latins. The reader may decide for himself between these and many other conflicting opinions. It seems, however, an objection to these two interpretations, that the names do not so properly designate the ecclesiastical, as the civil power; whereas, the number 666 belongs to the two horned or ecclesiastical beast. A title, assumed by the Pope, *Vicarius Filii Dei*, which contains 666, has been suggested, and it is free from the preceding objection, but, perhaps, it is hardly satisfactory, and it may be, that the true name remains yet to be discovered.

By an expression in v. 17, it appears, that having the mark of the beast, having the name of the beast, and having the number of the beast, are three distinct things. It may be thought, that to have his mark, may signify the use of the cross, according to the manner of the Roman Catholics. To have his name, may signify the outward profession of the Roman Catholic religion; and to have the number of his name, may mean the use of the Latin tongue in worship. The intelligent reader will consider of these things for himself; and as many volumes have been written, in explanation of this portion of the Apocalypse, (Chap. xii. and xiii.) it seems enough to leave the subject, upon the general outline which has been given.



CHAP. XXIII.

*The Three Angels, and the Harvest and Vintage
which succeed.—Rev. xiv.*

The twelfth and thirteenth chapters of the Apocalypse, shew the persecution of the Church by the mystic Babylon. Chapter xiv. proceeds to describe her deliverance. The five first verses represent the Church as it was at the Reformation, having just emerged from the superstitions of Popery. The reformers at that day sang, indeed, the song of Moses and of the Lamb. Great was the deliverance, and great was their rejoicing; and the song of joy from their lips, seemed as a new song to all the dwellers upon the earth. None but Christ's redeemed ones could understand it; for it was foolishness to those who abided in a mere carnal and worldly profession. The description here given of the reformed Church, marks two most important particulars. Its members were undefiled, for they partook not of the idolatrous ceremonies and superstitions of the Roman harlot, or her daughters: and following the Lord their Master, in faith, fear, and love, they were seen standing in the true and only righteousness, and without spot before God. The description is thus given:—

Rev. xiv. 1 to 5.—“ And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the Mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers, harping with their harps: and they sung, as it were, a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders; and no man could learn that song, but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth. These are they which were not defiled with women, for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the first fruits unto God, and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God.”

In the two next verses, a most important event is revealed, which prepares the way for the final deliverance of the Church. It is the universal spread of the Scriptures throughout the world.

Verses 6 and 7.—“ And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel, to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying, with a loud voice, fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.”

Commentators, who have written since the event, have interpreted these verses with reference to the British and Foreign Bible Society, which, most astonishingly and literally, has fulfilled this portion of

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the prophecy. From its first institution, in 1808, it has proceeded with a power, and a rapidity, which marks the immediate hand of God in the work. Through its own exertions, and those of its auxiliaries, in conjunction with other similar societies in different countries, which have been established chiefly under its auspices, and through its instrumentality, it has, at this time, nearly completed the vast work of conveying the word of life to every nation, tongue, and kindred, upon the face of the globe: and if, by the expression, "unto them that dwell on the earth," those are signified, who dwell in an outward and nominal profession of Christianity, the prophecy has been most fully accomplished. The admonition of the angel must not be passed over, for it contains an awful warning of things which must shortly come to pass. When this universal spread of the Scriptures takes place, the hour of God's judgment is come; which is, moreover, plainly intimated by our Lord himself, in Matthew xxiv. 14. The operations of the Bible Society may therefore be well regarded, as a leading feature of the times.

Verse 8 to 13.—" And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication. And the third angel followed them, saying, with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall

drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out, without mixture, into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone, in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever, and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name. Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus. And I heard a voice from heaven, saying, unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.

The reason assigned in verse 8, for the destruction of Babylon, is worthy of observation. It is not merely because she has corrupted the nations, but because she has persecuted—"made them drink of the wine of the *wrath* of her fornication."—Whether the two angels who are spoken of, are yet future, it is not easy to determine. It is evident that neither of them declare the destruction of Babylon to have been actually accomplished; because the latter one announces to the people, the judgments which will fall upon those who continue to abide in the city—which would be absurd, if the city were no more. The word fallen, must therefore be taken in the same sense as in Rev. xviii. 2, where it evidently signifies nothing more, than that Babylon is fallen from the faith once professed, and that she is no longer the same city as when she first appeared. She is now a city of the living dead, and her inhabitants are no longer the same as when she first appeared.

delivered to the saints, and is become the sink of every abomination.

If these two angels are, indeed, made manifest, the fulfilment may probably be traced in the general stir which is now seen to have taken place, throughout many parts of Christendom, evincing an universal and an increasing sense of the corruptions of the Romish Church. It is a well-known fact, that in the principal Roman Catholic countries, the Scriptures have been for some time making a silent and certain progress ; and that men who know, and who preach the truth, have been raised up in very many places. Men of this description, mixing with the population, have disseminated the truth of the gospel extensively, amongst the mass of the people ; and at the same time ecclesiastics, some of considerable note, have also been brought to know the truth, and to preach it to their congregations. Some of these have resisted the Pope's prohibition of the Scriptures ; some have, to a certain extent, renounced their allegiance to him ; and others have thrown it off entirely, declaring themselves to be Catholics, but not Roman Catholics. The circumstances, however, are as yet but imperfectly known ; and it may require that the events should be more fully developed, before an opinion is

hazarded, as to whether this portion of the prophecy has, or has not been accomplished. A short period, however, may decide: for all things seem preparing for the great event, which is announced in the following verses:—

Verses 14—20.—“ And I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of Man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle. And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle and reap; for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe. And he that sat on the cloud, thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped. And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry, to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth, for her grapes are fully ripe. And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great wine-press of the wrath of God. And the wine-press was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the wine-press, even unto the horses' bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs.”

These verses evidently relate to the circumstances of the last days. When the Son of Man cometh with power and great glory, the earth is reaped. The corn, that is, the good seed, which groweth upon the earth, will be carefully gathered together, and placed

in the Lord's storehouse, before the wicked are brought to judgment. This was shewn under the sixth seal, (see p. 172.)

The vine of the earth refers to the children of the evil one, who, having filled up the measure of their iniquity, are become ripe for destruction. They are to be destroyed without the precinct of the Church, for the wine-press of wrath is trod without the city, so that the mischief comes not nigh unto the Lord's people. The wicked will be gathered together for this purpose, as appears also by other parts of Scripture. The space of 1600 furlongs, over which their blood flows, has been supposed to describe the land where this judgment shall overtake them: and some think Palestine will be the place, the valley of Jezreel, or Esdraelon, in which David encountered the Philistine. But to those who are watching for their Master, such conjectures are of little interest, for they know they shall be with him, and shall be like him, in the day when they enter into his rest.

CHAP. XXIV.

Vials of Wrath.—Rev. xv.

The fifth set of symbols, which was presented to the eyes of the apostle, will be found in Rev. xv. and xvi. They are the vials of wrath, termed the seven last plagues. Commentators have considered the pouring out of these vials, as commencing with the French Revolution; and they interpret them with reference to the temporal judgments, which at that time fell upon France, and the other Catholic countries of Europe. The accuracy of this exposition seems questionable.

In the out-pouring of the seven vials, the wrath of God is said to be filled up—~~made~~, fulfilled, or finished—and if these vials should have respect only, or indeed principally, to temporal judgments, the heaviest portion of God's anger, even that which is manifested in respect to spiritual things, and to the concerns of the life to come; such as the taking away of the bread, and of the water of life, would in no degree form part of the judgment; neither would it be at all noticed in the prophecy. The prophet Micah, in

summing up the Lord's judgments upon Israel, adverts to judgments of this description, as the last, the most severe, and the most awful. "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing of the words of the Lord." Micah viii. 11. The prophet Isaiah speaks in this wise:—"Make the hearts of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes, lest they see with their eyes; and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed."—Isaiah vi. 10. And so the Psalmist, in denouncing the judgments upon Judah, says, "Let their table (of the Law) become a snare before them, and that which should have been for their welfare, let it become a trap. Let their eyes be darkened, that they see not." As judgments of this description became the portion of God's ancient people, who persecuted unto death HIM, who is the head of the mystical body, the Church; how should they not also be the portion of the Gentiles, who, in like manner, persecute the members of that mystical body! And well, indeed, did the apostle caution the Gentiles, lest they should incur a like condemnation, saying, "If God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee."

The vials are introduced thus, —

Rev. xv.—“ And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels, having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God. And I saw, as it were, a sea of glass, mingled with fire; and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God. And they sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty, just and true are thy ways, thou King of Saints. Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name; for thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee: for thy judgments are made manifest. And after that, I looked, and, behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened: and the seven angels came out of the temple, having the seven plagues, clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles. And one of the four beasts gave unto the seven angels, seven golden vials full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever. And the temple was filled with the smoke from the glory of God, and from his power: and no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled.”

The text declares, that another series of symbols, or types, is here introduced—another sign. And the persons described in v. 2, 3, and 4, as being in heaven, and standing on the sea of glass, mingled with fire, are those of the gospel dispensation, who being washed in the laver of regeneration, baptized with the Holy Ghost, and with fire, purified by faith, and made

perfect in love, are led by the Spirit of God, into more immediate communion with him, and by a more especial outpouring of his Spirit upon their hearts, are enabled to understand his word more perfectly; to know the signs of the times, to mark the words of prophecy, and to discern the awful judgment of God, as it cometh upon the children of Satan, in a manner not permitted unto others. To them, the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven, or, in other words, the Scriptures of truth are laid fully open; for all the treasures of the word of God are theirs, and many things which the world cannot understand, are revealed freely to their hearts; so that living, as it were, in the sun's disk, the brightness that is shed around them, affords them a clear prospect of the seven prophetical declarations, which denounce the seven last blows, or visitations of God, ordained to fall upon the mystic Babylon. The seven angels coming forth from the temple may represent prophets of the Old Testament, by whom the judgments in question have been foretold. Our present imperfect knowledge of the Hebrew Scriptures, and of the spiritual significations with which they abound; and our almost utter ignorance of the types and figures of the Old Testament, and of the true interpretation of Scripture names, make it very difficult, and perhaps impossible, to

trace out these angels accurately. One of them seems to be Ezekiel; for he shews to the apostle, the Lamb's wife. Rev. xxi. 9. — And the prophet Ezekiel alone describes the latter-day temple, which is the new Jerusalem, and the Lamb's wife. Another may be Jeremiah, for he shews the judgment of the great whore. Rev. xvii. 1. — And that prophet, whose words are principally followed in Rev. xviii. appears to have been particularly commissioned to declare the fall of Babylon; both ancient and modern, the type, and also the antitype.

The temple being filled with smoke from the glory of God, seems to intimate, that none, for the present, should enter into a full understanding of these things; and that until the several judgments should be ended, no one should be permitted to attain unto a perfect knowledge of the mystery of God. And it is found so at this day: for, although the effects of the vials of wrath are before our eyes continually, and, notwithstanding the very last of them is, perhaps, already pouring out, the veil of ignorance yet remaineth over us, and scarcely do the wisest of us understand how very nearly these present times of the world, reach unto the day of the Master's coming.

CHAP. XXV.

Vials of Wrath continued—Five First Vials considered.—Rev. xvi. 1 to 11.

The effusion of the vials comes next to be considered, according to their order ; and it is thus related :

Rev. xvi. 1, 2.—“ And I heard a great voice out of the temple, saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth. And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth ; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image.” •

The first trumpet brought a judgment upon the earth, so also doth the first vial, and the worshippers of the beast are smitten by it. The noisome and grievous sore, with which they are afflicted, is certainly not literal ; and it is probably intended to point out that diseased, and perverted state of mind, for which the great-supporters of the Papacy have at all times been very remarkable ; in preferring falsehood to truth, in devising and in following many strange delusions, and in receiving the doctrines of devils, as if they were the commandments of God. In this, as in other passages which have been noticed, the earth

may be taken to signify that worldly profession of religion, which has abounded in all ages, and among many sects of Christians, viz. carnal, earthly-minded men, making a fair outward shew in morality, zealous for doctrines which they understand not, pharisaically observant of forms, and resting in them as the sum and substance of true religion; whilst, at the same time, they are wholly untaught of God, and consider all those who have, and who profess vital godliness, to be neither more nor less than hypocrites, knaves, or fools, or enthusiasts, or fanatics.

Verse 3. "And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea; and it became as the blood of a dead man: and every living soul died in the sea."

This vial, poured out upon the sea, brings a judgment upon those of the Papal community, who, assuming the name of Catholic, care nothing for any religion whatever; neither concerning themselves with its doctrines or its forms. Persons of this description appear to be cut off altogether, for the sea becomes as the blood of a dead carcase.

Verses 4—7. "And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters: and they became blood. And I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shall be, because thou hast judged thus. For they have shed the blood of the saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink, for they are worthy. And I heard another out of the altar

say, Even so, Lord God Almighty: true and righteous are thy judgments!"

The turning of the rivers and the waters into blood, was one of the judgments upon Egypt: "and the water stank." And following this figure, it is evident, that the slaughter of men is not announced under this symbol, but rather, the corruption and pollution of *that water*, without which spiritual life cannot be supported. Under this most awful visitation, the truths and doctrines of Christianity are made corruption. And most wonderfully has this been fulfilled, upon those who bear the mark of the beast. Every truth of the word of God has been turned into or mixed up with error. The Scriptures have been referred to, only to be perverted; and the most unhallowed abominations have been established, upon what, they call the express word of Holy Writ. Instances of this description are without number, and it may not be uninteresting to adduce one example. They assert the infallibility of their Church: and they assert truly, that the Church of Christ shall never fail: they insist faithfully and accurately, upon promises which are made unto the Church: and then, assuming the Roman Catholic Church to be the Church of Christ, to which, and to which alone, these promises belong, they insist that the decisions of their rulers, and of their councils, are infallible, as

coming immediately from the inspiration of God; and that there is no salvation, out of their pale. Men who receive doctrines of this description, mistaking them for the living waters, drink blood indeed.

Verses 8, 9. "And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun: and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire. And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues: and they repented not to give him glory."

The sun which enlightens the gospel world is the word of God, as already remarked; and the effect of the fourth vial is, that this sun scorches the followers of the beast, with fervent heat. ... And this may be referred to the ecclesiastical tyranny established over the minds and consciences of men, throughout the Papal countries. Under the pretence of divine authority from the word of God, the Romish priesthood exercise their power, in confessions, penances, absolutions, and a round of soul-destroying superstitions and ceremonies, which they substitute for the gospel of Jesus Christ. ... And thus, are the cheering beams of the Sun of righteousness made a scorching heat, to waste and to consume the people.

Verses 10, 11. "And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast, and his kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain; and blas-

phemed the God of heaven, because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds."

The fifth vial brings a judgment upon the seat or throne of the beast, *ἐπὶ τὸν θρόνον τοῦ θηρίου*. The result is darkness, thick darkness, as under the fifth trumpet. And the figure seems to represent that state of things which has long existed, and may be seen at this day in Papal countries. The hearts and minds of the ecclesiastical rulers are darkened, as by a judicial blindness from the Lord : like Judah of old, they cannot see, neither can they understand, for their hearts have been made fat : and all sense and perception of spiritual things, appears to have been taken away from them. The seat or throne of the beast, refers to the seat of authority, or Papal governors ; and the judgment is further to be discovered, in that spirit of indifference and of scepticism, which prevailed generally among the great and the learned, throughout the Roman Catholic continent, before the French Revolution. France had become the great emporium of infidelity and atheism : it was deemed by her wits, and by many of the higher classes, the test of superior intellect, to throw off the Christian religion. Atheistical opinions spread. Priestcraft, and then the priests themselves, were ridiculed, derided, and held up to general scorn—and then religion itself was brought into disrepute :

till at length the connecting links of society were loosened, and in process of time, the Revolution of 1789 burst forth with all its horrors. Thus may be traced the plagues of the five first vials.

The vials are found throughout to run nearly parallel with the trumpets; and the circumstances related of the five first, are too short and general, to justify any minute and particular application of them, to historical events. The two last vials, however, go more into detail, as will be seen by the following chapter: and the seventh, like the sixth seal, and like the seventh trumpet, announces the judgment at Messiah's coming.

CHAP. XXVI.

*Vial of Wrath concluded—Sixth Vial—The River
Euphrates—The Three Unclean Spirits, like
Frogs—Seventh Vial.—Rev. xvi. 12—20.*

Rev. xvi. 12.—“ And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates: and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared.”

As the sixth trumpet has reference to the river Euphrates, so also has the sixth vial. And as, under the sixth trumpet the Turkish empire was founded, so commentators have supposed, that under the sixth vial that empire is destroyed, to make a way or passage, for the converted Jews (here called the kings of the east) to return into their own land.”

If the type be accurately examined, it will be found hardly to admit of this interpretation. The Turkish empire, though founded under the sixth trumpet, is in no wise whatever identified with the river Euphrates, which under the sixth vial is dried up; neither is it described as being founded upon that river; nor is it formed by the waters of it; but it is formed

through the instrumentality of certain angels or messengers, who under the sixth trumpet were loosed from that river, having been before bound up in it. Had the four Turkish dynasties been typified as the waters of the Euphrates, the sixth trumpet must have represented those waters, as flowing out from the bed of the river, extending themselves over its banks, and upon the countries round about. And in that case, the drying up of the waters, would indicate the exhaustion, or wasting away of that empire. But the symbol is far different. Four messengers are loosed from the river, to execute a judgment upon the lands. The drying up of the waters, therefore, cannot affect countries far beyond the waters of the river; and which have been subdued, and are possessed by the messengers who were loosed from the river. And if the integrity of the type be regarded, it may be asserted, without fear of contradiction, that whatever may be intended by the river Euphrates, and by the drying up of its waters, the overthrow or exhaustion of the Turkish empire, cannot possibly be signified. It being therefore necessary to seek for some other explanation, the following considerations are suggested:—

The river Euphrates was the boundary of the land of Canaan. It separated the Jews from the Gentiles; and possibly the interpretation of the symbol, may

depend upon this circumstance. The Jews, by their rejection of Messiah, are now separated from the Church of Christ, which spiritually is the Canaan of this day. The Gentile Christians are now dwelling in this mystical Canaan, as the acknowledged children of faithful Abraham; inasmuch as being Christ's, they are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise, (Gal. iii. 29.) But if the unbelief of the Jews were removed, they would enter into the spiritual land of promise, even into that mystical Canaan which is now enjoyed only by Gentiles. It is very far from improbable, that the kings of the east, spoken of in this passage, are indeed the children of Judah. We see the veil of ignorance and unbelief upon their hearts unto this day—but it is evidently removing; and when it is indeed removed, they will enter into their rest freely with us; and then, according to the promise, we shall all, as one fold under one shepherd, sit down together in the kingdom prepared for us, with Abraham, and with Isaac, and with Jacob. If this be the meaning of the symbol, the waters of that mystic Euphrates, are now drying up before our eyes: for the ignorance and unbelief under which the Jews have been held for so many centuries, seem now to be passing away.

Verses 13, 14.—“And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs, come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the

mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth, and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty."

The unclean spirits, here described, are like frogs, amphibious animals; belonging neither to the land nor to the water; although partly to both; but of no fixed or determinate character. One of them is from out of the mouth of the dragon, which may be heathen Rome, or that Old Serpent, called the Devil and Satan; It is probably the spirit of infidelity: the second is from out of the mouth of the beast, or the city, viz. of the ten Roman Catholic Kingdoms; and it may be the same revolutionary spirit of insubordination, which burst forth at the French Revolution; the third is from out of the mouth of the false prophet, or the Romish hierarchy; and it can be no other than that spirit of Popish superstition and bigotry, by which ecclesiastical Rome has been distinguished from the first; and which now urges them forward to renew their old forms and maxims of government, at an era of the world, to which they are by no means adapted. A short reference to the leading features of the times, will shew that these three spirits have already gone forth into action. The infidel, and the revolutionary spirits, may be traced in every part of Europe; and it is not a little singular that, in July

1819, exactly thirty years from the first burst of popular fury, in the French Revolution of 1789, there are held in England immense popular meetings, regularly organized, in which opinions are avowed, and resolutions passed, of a completely revolutionary cast, and utterly subversive of the government; and that at one of them the first blood was shed, which was followed by a much larger effusion of blood at Manchester a month afterwards. The other countries of Europe are said to be equally disturbed, perhaps, even more so, from the operation of the same spirits: and, speaking after the manner of men, it seems impossible to conjecture, how and when these things shall end. The zealous spirit of the old Papal power, in renewing old forms, and bringing back all things, as far as may be to the old regime, has also been abundantly displayed since the expulsion of Buonaparte from France; and the Papacy has reared its head, striving to strengthen and extend its dominion in the several nations of the earth. How much longer, and to what extent these things may proceed, it is not for us to say; but, with the passing events before us, it is not possible to deny, that these three unclean spirits have gone forth into action; and the purpose, which Scripture declares, is to gather together the kings of the earth, and of the whole world to battle. The setting up of the Papacy is very re-

markable. Already are seen laws to restore the ecclesiastical power, to sanction new concordats, to re-establish the Jesuits, the monasteries, the inquisition, and many other abominations, which were brought to nought in revolutionary times: whilst the Roman Catholic priesthood is again employed, in setting up images, processions, masses, and saint worship, rebuilding the temples, which had fallen to decay, replacing the candlesticks upon the altars, and in republishing their false glosses upon Scripture. And the Pontiff himself is sending forth his bulls, to prohibit the use of the Scriptures in all places which are subject to his control. These things are well worthy of our attention; and if the three unclean spirits have indeed gone forth upon the face of the earth, it may be well to attend to the admonition contained in the words which follow, and to the blessing which is there pronounced.

Verses 15, 16.—“Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame. And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon.”

Armageddon, the place of gathering together, has been supposed to signify the *mountain of Megiddo*, which is a town of Palestine; and again, the *destruction of Megiddo*. And it is inferred, that a battle

will be fought there; and that armies of men will be collected before the pouring out of the seventh vial. The results, however, which are stated in the verses which follow, are not such as would proceed from a battle of this description. And if Calassio's interpretation of the word be right, as given under the proper name מַגִּדוֹן, a conflict of opinions, rather than of soldiers, is referred to. He translates it "Mons Evangelizationis, vel annunciationis," and the word seems to point to the land or spot, from whence the gospel is sent forth in the last days. And is not a conflict of opinions upon religious subjects evidently exhibited at this day, in every part of Europe, and more especially in this land of Bibles? Surely, at the very time in which the spirits of infidelity, of insubordination, and of Popery, have raised up their heads, the Spirit of the Lord has been manifested in his people: and, notwithstanding the empty professors with which it may abound, probably, there never was a period, when the word of truth had a freer course throughout the land; or in which souls in greater numbers were brought into the fold of Christ; or in which such various and such strenuous exertions were made to diffuse the word, and the knowledge of eternal life throughout the universe. This is foretold in Isaiah lix. 19:—"The enemy shall come in like a flood, and

the spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him." The context makes it evident that this is a prophecy concerning the last days. Judging then after man's judgment, it should seem that strange results may be looked for, and, according to the word of prophecy, they will arise under the seventh vial.

Verses 17 to 21.—"And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done. And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great. And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell; and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her, the cup of wine of the fierceness of his wrath. And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent; and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great."

The seventh vial poured out into the air, may be upon the spirits and minds of men, as preparing them to execute that, which God hath appointed. The effect which follows, is the most tremendous revolution ever witnessed upon the earth; and the prophet Daniel has described it as a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation. It can hardly be profitable to risk conjectures, as to what may be the detail of circumstances, or the voices, and thunders,

and lightnings, and the great hail, or how Babylon shall be divided into three parts ; but the judgment of that polluted city is revealed, and the cities of the nations are judged, by which may be understood, their ecclesiastical establishments ; and, also their civil governments, for such are the mountains and the islands ; the mountains of the earth referring to those nations which profess Christianity ; and the islands of the sea, to the heathen world. The effect of these awful dispensations, whether in the earlier, or in the latter times of the world, is ever and continually the same. Pharaoh repented not, for his heart was hardened ; and so the children of the evil one, in the last days of the judgment, blaspheme because of the plagues.

CHAP. XXVII.

The Great Harlot upon the Scarlet-coloured Beast.—

Rev. xvii.

The warfare of the Church has been treated of, in the preceding prophecies. The destruction of her enemies, and the glories of the latter day, form the subject of those which remain. It has been seen, that the fourth great monarchy of the earth, prophesied of by Daniel, is the great persecutor of the gospel Church. That kingdom has already been seen under three different manifestations of its power ; as Pagan, as imperial, and as Papal Rome : it is developed, lastly, under a new character, as atheistical and infidel Rome, and under that character it will perish. Before its end arrives, the judgment falls upon the Papacy, which is brought upon it by the progress of infidelity. And the detail of that judgment, occupies the seventeenth and eighteenth chapters of Revelations.

Rev. xvii. 1 to 6.—“ And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither ; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters ; with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication. So he carried me away in the spirit into,

the wilderness; and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet-coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet-colour, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand, full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication. And upon her forehead was a name written, Mystery, Babylon the Great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth. And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and, when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration."

After what has been already said, the general signification of this symbol will immediately present itself to the reader. He will discern the great idolatrous Church of Rome, ruling over the kings of the Latin earth, and over many peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues; glutted with the carnage of the saints, and upheld or supported by the Roman power, in its last state of ten divided kingdoms. The angel calls the attention of the apostle to the following particulars, as necessary to the understanding of the type.

Verses 7 to 18.—"And the angel said unto me, wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns. The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition; and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is. And here is the mind which hath wisdom.

The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth. And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet to come; and when he cometh he must continue a short space. And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition. And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast. These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast. These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings; and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful. And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues. And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire. For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled. And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth."

In chapter xii. the outward visible Church was seen flying into the wilderness, seeking, in the arms of the world, protection from the malice of her persecutor. Being nourished and supported by the hand of man in the wilderness, she forsook her first love, and became a harlot, like Aholah and Aholibah of old. In the chapter now under consideration, she is seen standing in the maturity of her corruptions, upheld by her lovers, decked in costly ornaments, gluttoned

and satiated with the blood of the martyrs, and having the cup of idolatry in her hand ; of which cup, the kings of the earth, and all the nations, and people over whom her power is extended, have partaken without exception. Disguised and changed, as she now is, she can scarcely be recognized for the same woman, who before had been clothed with the sun of righteousness, and had the crown of twelve stars. See page 213. The name now upon her forehead is mystery, which is the leading feature of Popery, taking that word to mean, according to its vulgar acceptance, a thing absolutely unintelligible, and incomprehensible.* And it is a very remarkable coincidence, that the word *μυστήριον* should formerly have been engraved upon the Pope's tiara. Her name is called Babylon, which signifies mixture or confusion ; and so, her abominations consist in mixing heavenly and earthly things together, in confounding law with gospel ; and the Jewish, with the Christian ordinances and ceremonies, From this unhallowed association, many abominations have proceeded ; and therefore is she called the mother of harlots ; as giving birth to many, and to strange corruptions of doctrine, of ceremony, and of moral practice. The

* *Μυστήριον* signifies some sacred thing, hidden or secret, which is naturally unknown to human reason, and is made known by the revelation of God.—See Parkhurst: Lex: Gr: in Vec.

many waters, upon which the great whore sitteth, are explained v. 15, to be peoples, multitudes, and nations. She is above the kings of the earth, ruling over them, causing them to obey her commands, and turning them to idolatry and superstition. Such briefly is the Papal power, standing in the maturity of its corruptions, and the particulars are so fully traced by Protestant commentators, that it is unnecessary to go further into detail.

The next point to be considered is the character of the wild beast, who at this period carries the mystic Babylon. It is the beast of the bottomless pit, mentioned once before, as the slayer of God's faithful witnesses, in Rev. xi. 7. and it typifies the Roman power in its last and infidel condition, subsisting in the ten Latin kingdoms, as already explained. Viewing the wild beast as he is exhibited in this place, there are no crowns upon his horns; and the names of blasphemy are transferred from the heads to the body of the beast himself. He is described as arising from the bottomless pit of infidelity, and it is he that goeth into perdition: under this form he perishes.

In the earthquake of the French Revolution, the imperial head of the Latin empire was brought low.

Its power and its name were taken away together, by Napoleon Buonaparte, in the year 1806. But still there has remained an imperial head amongst the Latin kingdoms ; for when the German empire fell, France was raised up into an empire, and the chief ruler of Austria retained the title of emperor. It cannot, therefore, be said, that the imperial head has passed away. The Latin power, however, assumed a new shape. And there is no longer a Roman or a German emperor, who, as the chief of the other Latin kingdoms, has authority to marshal them to war : and who, as the first-born son of the Church of Rome, upholds the Papal Church, and her authority, being ready at all times to draw the sword in her defence : but the Papal Church is now in these latter days, upheld entirely by the individual power of each separate kingdom or government, as the established religion of the land. There has been also another great change : the revolutionary and infidel spirit has gone forth pretty generally in the Latin countries ; and the Church has lost that hold which it once had, upon the feelings and the affections of the people. In many places, now, the bondage of priestcraft is scarcely tolerated ; and a large portion of the people, in more than one Papal country, especially in France, seem to view that Church, not merely with an indifferent, but with a jealous eye ; and appear to look for-

ward to the time, when her superstitions and her mummeries shall be brought to nought. And according to present appearances, it is by no means impossible, that a day may not be very distant, when a burst of revolutionary fury, such as was seen thirty years ago, may bring the Papal fabric to the ground suddenly, in more than one country of Europe. An event of this description, extending itself through the Latin empire, would be a very literal fulfilment of verse 16. Conjectures, however, upon future events, do not belong to this inquiry. That which is written shall come to pass, but the mode and the circumstances of the fulfilment, are not objects of legitimate investigation.

It is worthy of remark also, how much the situation, and the aspect of things are changed by the lapse of years. The Church of Rome formerly was paramount, and exercised the full power of the state, in wrath against her enemies; destroying them with fire, and with sword, and with divers kinds of death. This state of things was exhibited under the symbol of the two wild beasts in Rev. xiii.; the last of which, having two horns like a lamb, exercised the power of the first before his face. But in these latter times, the Church no longer uses the sword of the state in manner as heretofore; she is satiated—she has taken her fill—and is become drunken with the blood of the

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martyrs. She is no longer seen persecuting, and using against the saints, a power which is not her own; but she is taking her ease—sitting as a queen—reposing and resting herself upon the beast who carries her. The temporal and the ecclesiastical power remain as before; but the circumstances of both the one and the other, have undergone a very sensible change; even as the light and shade vary, in the morning and the evening view.

The particular consideration of the heads of the beast, which arises from out of the sea, (Rev. xiii) was passed over at p. 225, that it might be noticed in this place; for the beast of the sea, and the beast of the bottomless pit, are the same power—that is, the Latin kingdom, in different stages of its latter-day career. This Latin kingdom (see v. 8.) was not in existence when the apostle saw the vision; for it had become incorporated with the Roman power; but still, as the Romans used the Latin tongue, and possessed the old Latin kingdom as part of their empire, it had a sort of quasi existence still, even in the days of the apostle; and it was destined to rise up again, in its ancient character of a Latin empire, and under that character to perish.

The seven heads are in the first place (verse 9,)

declared by the angel to be seven mountains, upon which the idolatrous Church sitteth. Upon these heads (Rev. xiii. 1.) are the name of blasphemy, and this, probably, refers to the seven electorates of the empire, for they were indeed the high places, eminences, or mountains of the empire. All these were united in the service of the Papal Church: by their election the emperor was seated on his throne; and as they assume the name of *holy*, which belongs only to God, the name of blasphemy is upon them, as upon the empire itself. But it is explained further, that the seven heads refer also to seven kings, or forms of government; and these remain to be developed. As these heads belong to the Latin kingdom, they must not be confounded with the heads of the dragon, or Pagan Rome; and they must be sought for in the forms of government, which existed either in the Old Latin kingdom, or in the Roman empire, after the Latin kingdom became part of it; or in the Latin kingdom, when it afterwards revived. Before the Romans subdued the Latin power, its government had been exercised under three forms:—1. The Regal; 2. The Dictatorial; 3. The Prætorial. The forms of government used at Rome, after the Latin kingdom became part of it, were, the Consular, the Triumviral, and the Imperial.—It has been shewn

already, that the imperial head was slain by the sword, in the year 476; and, after that event, the supreme power of the government, fell into the hands of the Carlovingian Patriciate, by which it was exercised for seventy or eighty years. This was the seventh head, ordained to arise after the days of the apostle, and to continue for a short time: and when Charlemagne was crowned, the eighth head arose, which was nothing more, than one of the old forms revived: and thus the eighth, or imperial head, was one of the seven; and it remaineth unto this day. This renewal of the imperial head has already been shewn, under the figure of one of the heads of the wild beast of the sea, being wounded by the sword unto death, and that deadly wound healed.

The ten horns or kingdoms of the Latin empire, have already been enumerated. Their power, as kingdoms, was established early in the sixth century, and thereby the Roman power assumed the shape symbolized in Rev. xiii. as the wild beast of the sea. These kingdoms have agreed most wonderfully, in giving their power and their support to the Holy Roman Empire, and to the Holy Roman Catholic Church, as declared in v. 17. But it seems by v. 14, as if they were ordained in the last days of all, to

engage in personal conflict with Messiah. Before this takes place, however, they are made the instruments of vengeance upon the harlot; and they shall make her desolate, and burn her with fire.

CHAP. XXVIII.

Destruction of Babylon.—Rev. xviii.

The prophecy goes on to relate the destruction of the idolatrous Babylon, which is thus introduced :—

Rev. xviii. 1—3. “ And after these things, I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory. And he cried mightily, with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and the cage of every unclean and hateful bird. For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth have waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies.”

The angel here spoken of appears, by comparing the passages, to be the same which is mentioned in Rev. xiv. 8. The proclamation is to the same effect in each instance, but here it is more fully given: Babylon, however, is not *destroyed*; but the light which the angel reflects upon the earth, makes it manifest, that she is altogether become corrupt; and the minds of men are thereby enabled to discern her idolatries, and her abominations. They hate the whore, that they may be prepared to destroy her.

Whether under this symbol of the angel, any thing more is intended, than the opening of the understandings of men, by the secret influence of the Spirit of God, remains yet to be seen ; but, if not, the fulfilment of the symbol, to a certain extent, is already become manifest ; for many of the Roman Catholic communion, already see and loath its corruptions ; and a spirit of reform has sprung up in the very midst of their ecclesiastical empire. Some, as before remarked, have thrown off their allegiance to the Pope, declaring themselves Catholics, and not Papists, or Roman Catholics : and others have insisted upon the free use and circulation of the Scriptures, notwithstanding the prohibitions of the Vatican. And thus, in these latter days of the gospel dispensation, when the gospel of the kingdom is preached in all the world, for a witness unto all nations, as it now is ; there is an out-pouring of light and knowledge, which is reflected even unto many, who are apparently in a carnal profession of Christianity, enabling them to perceive the vileness and the pollution of Babylon, and the signs of her approaching downfall.

Malachi iv. 5, 6, announces the coming of Elijah, the prophet, before the great and dreadful day of the Lord ; and our Lord himself declares, in Matthew

xvii. 41, and the correspondent gospels, that this prediction was not fully accomplished in John the Baptist: for he explains, that although John was the Elias of that day, as the messenger before the Lord; to prepare the way for him in the season when he came in humility; yet that, previous to his advent in glory, Elias truly should first come and restore all things. Hence, it might be deduced, that as one messenger, of whom Elias was the type, preceded the coming in the flesh; another, perhaps the *true* Elias, will announce his coming in glory. In this view of the subject, the passage under consideration, or the verse which immediately follows, may refer to this latter-day Elias. The reader must judge of these things for himself.

Verses 4 to 24.—"And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues: For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities. Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double, according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled, fill to her double. How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow. Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her. And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication, and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her

burning, standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas! that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come. And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more. The merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all thyine wood, and all manner of vessels of ivory, and all manner of vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble, and cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men. And the fruits that thy soul lusted after are departed from thee, and all things which were dainty and goodly are departed from thee, and thou shalt find them no more at all. The merchants of these things, which were made rich by her, shall stand afar off for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing, and saying, Alas, alas! the great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls! For in one hour so great riches is come to nought. And every ship-master, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off, and cried, when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What city is like unto this great city! And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas, alas! that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness! for in one hour is she made desolate. Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her. And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all. And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpets, shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft he be, shall be found any more in thee; and

the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee; And the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee; for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived. And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that was slain upon the earth."

Little comment is necessary upon that which is manifestly unfulfilled. But the sudden judgment, announced in this, and other parts of Scripture, is peculiarly striking. It is in one hour, with violence; and it is described as a millstone thrown into the sea.

The circumstances which attended the taking of ancient Babylon were, beyond all question, ordained as a typical representation of what should come to pass upon the mystic Babylon; and the drying up of the Euphrates is a feature common to both. That ancient city received its supplies, and derived a considerable portion of its strength, from the waters of the Euphrates, which flowed through the city. But, in the day appointed for her destruction, those waters were dried up: they were turned from their course by the besiegers, and the channel of the river became dry; and thus the soldiers of Darius entered, and became masters of the city. The prince of that ill-fated capital, knew nothing of the drawing off the waters, neither did he suspect the danger which was

so near. In his fancied security, he was celebrating an impious feast unto his idol-gods; and, as if to fill up the measure of his iniquity, he had ventured to call for the sacred vessels of Jehovah's temple, and to use them for his unhallowed rites. Whilst he was thus at the banquet, the hand-writing upon the wall troubled him; and the prophet of the Lord declared to him, that God had numbered his kingdom, and finished it: and in that night was Belshazzar, the king of the Chaldeans, slain; and Darius, the Median, took the kingdom.—Dan. vi.

Chapters i. and li. of Jeremiah relate the fall of Babylon, but it is not possible to restrict their meaning to the fall of the ancient city. Rev. xviii. repeats the words of Jeremiah, and it will tend to elucidate the subject, if the words of that prophet are adverted to: for he instructs us, that when Babylon is overthrown, "the children of Israel shall come, and the children of Judah together, going and weeping: they shall go and seek the Lord their God."—"And in those days, and at that time, saith the Lord, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found: for I will pardon them whom I reserve."—Jerem. i. 4, 10. This cannot but refer to the latter-day deliverance of the spiritual seed, both Gentile and

Jew : and the passages are not to be applied to the ancient city only. Verses 30 and 31 describe the messengers who follow one after the other, to announce to the Prince of Babylon, that his enemies have made a lodgment within his walls ; "One post shall run to meet another, and one messenger to meet another, to shew the king of Babylon that his city is taken at one end, and that the passages are stopped. And the reeds they have burned with fire, and the men of war are affrighted."

In verse 35, the Church calls for vengeance upon Babylon. "The violence done to me, and to my flesh, be upon Babylon—shall the inhabitants of Zion say ; and my blood upon the inhabitants of Chaldea—shall Jerusalem say."

V. 46 intimates, that an alarm shall be given, before the final judgment comes to pass. Possibly, the alarm alluded to, was sounded at the French Revolution. "And lest your heart faint, and ye fear for the rumour that shall be heard in the land ; a rumour shall both come one year, and after that, in another year, shall come a rumour, and violence in the land, ruler against ruler. Therefore, behold, the days come, that I will do judgment upon all the graven images of Babylon : and her whole land shall be con-

founded, and all her slain shall fall in the midst of her."

These Scriptures mutually reflect light upon each other; and, as their accomplishment proceeds, they will doubtless be more perfectly understood. And here the commentary must close: for, as the remaining chapters of the Apocalypse reveal the glories of the new dispensation, which cannot possibly be understood until it comes to pass, it were vain to attempt to treat of them, otherwise than in general terms.

CHAP. XXIX.

Time and Signs of the Advent.

The time of the Second Advent, and the signs that shall announce its approach, come now to be considered ; and in tracing out this part of the subject, it will be necessary to recapitulate some of the statements that have been already made. It is only by collecting into one focus the scattered rays of light, which present themselves in different parts of Scripture, that we shall be enabled to form any just opinion, either concerning the time which is ordained for the manifestation of these wonders, or concerning the signs of their approach, or concerning the events which may be expected.

It is written, that the day of the Lord shall come as a snare upon all them, that dwell upon the face of the whole earth. In that tremendous day, the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of Jesus Christ. That such a day shall come *certainly*, is one of the most positive revelations of Holy Writ ; and that it shall come suddenly, and in an hour that

men think not, is declared with equal plainness. In the days of his flesh, the Lord Jesus said to his disciples, "Of that day and hour knoweth no man." But still he set before them clear and certain signs, which should indicate its near approach. The great apostle of the Gentiles assures the children of the light, that that day shall not overtake them as a thief; and the prophet Daniel intimates, that in the latter day the wise shall understand—and who are the wise, but they whom the Spirit teacheth?

As far as can now be discovered, the prophet Daniel alone affords the chronological date of the appointed time. An accurate understanding of the historical and ceremonial types, would, in all probability, bring with it a revelation of this mystery; but hitherto the Spirit of revelation has shone but faintly upon this portion of the Sacred Volume; and, as things at present stand, Daniel is the only guide to the date. That prophet, in his important prophecy, which occupies his three last chapters, mentions three periods of time, viz. 1260 years, 1290 years, and 1335 years, as before pointed out at p. 110, and at one or other of these periods, the coming of Messiah in glory might be looked for: for the prophet speaks of it, as a time, when "many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting

life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." And it is revealed in other places, that the resurrection does not take place, till the Lord Jesus cometh. The period of 1260 years, is again mentioned in the Book of Revelations; but, as it has already been suggested, that probably this period expired in the year 1789, and as Messiah has not yet appeared, this date comes not here to be considered, except as it serves to fix the other periods, which in fact are additions to the 1260 years. The prophet Daniel, in his vision of the ram and he-goat, declares that the cleansing of the sanctuary shall take place at the expiration of 2300 years, a time which is mentioned only in that prophecy. This period must necessarily terminate with one of those already mentioned, viz. the 1290 or 1835 years; for, till the Lord cometh, the sanctuary cannot be cleansed, inasmuch as none but Michael, the great Prince, who standeth up for his people, even the Deliverer who cometh out of Zion, shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob; and it is not until after the Angel of the covenant hath come suddenly to his temple, and hath sat there as a refiner's fire, to purify the sons of Levi, that they can offer an offering in righteousness. (See Rom. xi. 26, and Malachi iii. 1—3. Thus it is seen that two periods are spoken of, having each one common termination in the second coming of Messiah.

The statement at p. 71, shews that the expiration of the 1290 years, may be the date of the second advent. The calculation of this period was there taken from the decree of Justinian, in the year 529, which brings the 1260 years, to the year of the French Revolution, (1789,) to which 30 years are to be added, making 1819. The 2300 years of Daniel have been spoken of at p. 84, and it was suggested, that it might be shewn, that they also may terminate in the year 1819. If this should be the true date, events must ere long so reveal it. It cannot, however, but be admitted, that July 1819 was an important epoch in the history of this country, and, consequently, in the history of Christendom; and it is possible, that strange and unlooked for changes may have their commencement from that date.—See Chap. xxvi.

The date being thus disposed of, the signs and circumstances which shall denote the coming of Messiah, are in the next place to be considered. Scripture says, there shall be signs in the heavenly bodies, distress and perplexity amongst the nations, and mens' hearts failing them for fear, and for looking for the things that are coming upon the earth, for the powers of the heavens shall be shaken. These seem the immediate fore-runners, or, perhaps, attendants upon the Lord's presence. But our Lord speaks of

other signs which precede, and which are termed "the beginnings of sorrows;" and they are wars, and rumours of wars, nation rising against nation, and famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes in divers places. These beginnings of sorrows pass away, or have an intermission, before the immediate signs of his presence are manifested; for another Scripture declares, that at a time "when they shall say peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them." And the destruction thus spoken of, is at the Lord's immediate coming. Again it is written, like as in the days of Noah, they shall be eating and drinking, and marrying, and giving in marriage. And again, like as in the days of Lot, they shall be eating and drinking, and buying and selling, and planting and building. These manifestations of ease and enjoyment could hardly be going forward, at the same time with the judgments before spoken of; and therefore it may be conjectured, that the first or preliminary judgments will be stayed for a short moment, so that these signs also may be brought to pass; and that in the midst of these things, the final judgments will supervene, accompanying or introducing the personal appearance of Messiah. Without presuming to speculate upon future events, or to declare the Lord's times and seasons; it cannot, surely, be inexpedient to ask, whether the events of the last few

years have not been of a very marked character, and answering so precisely to the foregoing description, that were the Lord on this very day to be revealed, all men must assuredly confess, that the several circumstances prophesied of, as immediately preceding his advent, have been fulfilled before their eyes.

Again, Rev. xiv. represents the angel flying into the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to them that dwell upon the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people. When the event takes place, which is signified by this symbol, the day of the Lord's judgment is actually at hand, for the angel cries unto all men, "Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come."—See p. 233. In conformity with this Scripture, our Lord himself speaks in Matt. xxiv. 14. "The gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world, for a witness unto all nations, and *then* shall the end come." This Scripture in no wise intimates, that all the nations shall be converted by the time of Messiah's coming, for the gospel is only sent to them for a testimony; and Luke xviii. shews, that when the advent takes place, the gospel will have effected but little towards their conversion; for it is there written, in a context which treats of the second

advent, "nevertheless, when the Son of Man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" Matt. x. 28, affords a further explanation of this point, and demonstrates, that the work of carrying the gospel to all nations, shall by no means be completed at the time of Messiah's advent—"Verily I say unto you, ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of Man be come." This last mentioned passage occurs in the instructions which the Lord gave to his twelve apostles, when in the days of his flesh he first appointed and sent them forth; and which was a type or figure of what should be done after his resurrection. It is very manifest that these words have reference to after times, for the whole context, from v. 16 to the end, contains instructions to the Lord's servants for their conduct and guidance under persecutions, when they should be delivered up to councils, and scourged in synagogues, and should be brought before governors and kings for Christ's sake, and for a testimony against them, and the Gentiles: and when the brother should deliver up the brother unto death, and the father, the child. These things never took place until after the Lord Jesus had risen from the dead, and his apostles went forth as He commanded, to preach the everlasting gospel; which fact alone is sufficient to establish the assertion, that in the verse

referred to, (Matt. x. 23.) the time intended is that which immediately precedes the second advent.

Again—the Apostle Paul, in his letter to Timothy, describes the condition of the outward Church in the last days ; and he exhibits a melancholy portrait of the times in which we live. The testimony of Peter is much to the same effect ; but he adds a peculiar feature which corresponds with Luke xviii. 8. to which reference has already been made. Peter says, 2 Peter iii. 3. “ there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, saying, where is the promise of his coming, for, since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation ? ” In conformity with this Scripture, the Church is now found more peculiarly blind to this blessed truth of the Lord’s glorious advent, than it has ever been at any former period. The most spiritually-minded men, amidst the signs and wonders which surround them, expect nothing more than a general amendment in the condition of civil society, through the universal spread of the gospel amongst all nations ; and through the effects, which, under the Lord’s blessing, may arise from the education and instruction of persons in every class of life. This is their Millennium—and they are apt for the most part to treat all those Scriptures, which de-

clear in plain terms the personal coming and reign of the Lord Jesus upon earth, with his risen saints, as if they were merely figurative expressions; signifying the advancement and progress of the gospel, and the worldly honour and approbation with which ministers and pastors, and other distinguished Christians shall be greeted, in those days of increased light and knowledge, which their scheme anticipates. In short, the personal appearance of Messiah in the clouds of heaven, with power and with great glory, as HE hath said; coming to bind Satan, to establish a visible kingdom, and reign upon earth; to rule there in open glory, with his glorified saints; is an event of which it may safely be affirmed, there are not many now dwelling upon earth, who consider it as a possible circumstance. Indeed, as to Messiah's personal advent in any way, they think it very far off, and that it is to be expected at some remote and indefinite period, and at the end of what they call the Millennium.

Again—Let us learn a parable of the fig-tree, which is the peculiar and acknowledged symbol of the Jewish Church and nation. When the Lord Jesus drew nigh unto Jerusalem, on the occasion of his going thither to attend the last passover, he pronounced upon the barren fig-tree, the curse which is

recorded in two of the gospels. Matthew stamps an additional importance upon the circumstance by the expression, *συγκατα*, a certain fig-tree; and unquestionably the curse had a typical reference to the Jews. Veritas soon as the gospel dispensation was fully established, by the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, salvation was no longer of the Jews; spiritual fruit could no longer be gathered from the Jewish Church; from that time, Christians became children of the promise, being made heirs of salvation by faith in the crucified Saviour, whom *the Jew* still denies; indeed, when he confesses to that name, he is no longer a Jew, but a Christian. Now, as in reference to the signs of the second advent, our Lord uses the type of the fig-tree, which by the tenderness of her branch, and the putting forth of her leaves, shews the summer to be nigh; observing that, in like manner, the signs which he enumerated, should announce the advent to be at hand; so, he seems by this use of a type, which has so peculiar a reference to the Jewish nation, to convey an intimation, that some unusual movement amongst the Jews, was to be expected immediately before the advent; and thus it is found at this day as a striking feature of the times, that in every part of the globe, the Jews, in direct opposition to all their former habits, are now willing to inquire concerning Jesus of Nazareth, and to read

and to consider the testimony which has been given concerning him, as if to inquire whether he be indeed The Christ. The Hebrew New Testament has been well received amongst them, almost without exception; instances of individual conversion are frequent and increase daily; and it is no slight circumstance, that the great Emperor of the North, whose dominions are more extensive than any other empire upon the face of the earth, has appointed, in the centre of his vast dominions, cities of refuge, with a view to establish and to embody as a people, such Jews as may become Christians. To this it may added, that generally throughout the world, the Jews seem every where awakened to the expectation of some important national crisis. Surely the branch of the fig-tree is become tender, and she is now putting forth her leaves.

Another circumstance of the times, as connected with the Jewish people, presents also a remarkable feature. For many ages Judah has been a by-word, a hissing, an astonishment amongst the nations of the earth: and the rulers of many countries professing Christianity, have thought that too much enmity could not be shewn, nor too much oppression exercised against a people, whose forefathers had crucified the Lord of life and glory. This crime has been

visited accordingly for very many centuries upon the dispersed of Judah, as a national sin. But the word of prophecy by David says, Ps. ciii. that when "the time to favour Zion, yea, the set time is come," the Lord's servants are found to "take pleasure in her stones, and favour the dust thereof." A singular fulfilment of this may be traced in the acts of Congress at Aix-la-Chapelle, at which a stipulation was entered into, by the Christian powers there assembled, for amending the civil and political condition of this people throughout the world; taking care, at the same time, not to interfere with their peculiar institutions, or with their character as a nation.

The condition of the true, spiritual seed of Christ, at the time of the second advent, is prophesied of in Isaiah xxix. where the prophet addresses the Church, "Ho, Ariel!" This name, translated in the margin Lion of God, signifies also, Light of God, according to Calassie; and the expression is not, as in the English translation, a denunciation of vengeance, (Woe to Ariel!) but an address to arrest the attention. The church is here described as being brought down low, even to the very ground, and her voice as a whisper out of the dust: and so is the last state of the spiritual Church in Laodicea, prophesied of in Rev. iii. (See p. 145.)

An historical type setting forth the same truth, is to be found in the old age and weakness of David, represented in 1 Kings i.—David gat no heat : there is no spiritual warmth in the professors of vital Christianity, and therefore David seeks warmth in the bosom of Abishag the Shunamite. The gospel, almost a dead letter in many Christian countries, is sent into the lands of the heathen, and fruit unto eternal life is there brought forth ; but no new sects or churches are formed, as the type intimates, for there was no offspring to David from Abishag. This type may be illustrated further by observing, that the Lord ordained Solomon, Prince of Peace, to succeed to the throne of David, but many would set up Adonijah ; and so, in the present day, many are looking for and seeking to establish a Millennium after their own imagination, instead of waiting patiently for the manifestation of that which the Lord hath promised. Now Isaiah in Chap. xxix. (referred to) describes the glorious coming of Messiah to the Church, whilst *in this low state*, in the following terms, v. 5, 6, 7. and they correspond exactly with Rev. vi. 12—17. and other Scriptures already adduced—“ The multitude of the terrible ones shall be as chaff that passeth away, yea, it shall be at an instant, suddenly : thou shalt be visited of the Lord of hosts, with thunder, and with earthquakes, and great noise, with storm

and tempest, and the flame of a devouring fire. And the multitude of all the nations that fight against Ariel, even all that fight against her and her munition, and that distress her, shall be as a dream of a night vision."

CHAP. XXX.

Circumstances of the Advent.

Having already considered the time of the second advent, and the signs which shall indicate its approach, it remains to inquire next regarding the events which shall then be brought to pass. The Sacred Volume declares, that the Lord Jesus cometh with power and great glory, to deliver his people, and to destroy the ungodly. "Every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him, and all the kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him." Rev. vi. 12, describes the effect of this manifestation of Messiah upon those who are not his. Their utter astonishment and dismay, and the overturning of their unhallowed systems of government, both in Church and state, are the events there principally spoken of. They who are not his, see and know that he comes to visit them in wrath, and they would desire, by any means in their power, to hide themselves, lest he consume them.

But the Lord speaketh peace unto his people; and before he proceeds to execute judgment, he gathers

them, unto himself. The types of Noah and of Lot, which are specially referred to by the Lord Jesus, as illustrative of the second coming, convey the most explicit intimation of this truth. These types have been just noticed for another purpose, but they must be considered further. "The Lord commanded Noah to come into the ark, and on the self-same day he entered, and Shem, and Ham, and Japhet," &c. "And the Lord shut him in"---and then the flood came. And so also, before the destruction of the cities of the plain, the angel said unto Lot, arise, take thy wife and thy two daughters which are here, lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city. And as he lingered, they laid hold upon their hands, and brought them forth. Lot prayed that he might be allowed to remain in safety at Zoar, which was granted to him; and the angel added, "Haste thee, escape thither; for I cannot do any thing till thou be come thither." In the account given in Ezekiel ix. of the angels with their slaughter weapons, who were commissioned to destroy; the man clothed with linen, with a writer's inkhorn by his side, was commanded first to mark the chosen ones, that they might be spared from the vengeance. When the Lord smote all the first-born of Egypt, he passed over the door, which had the blood of the lamb upon the lintel and the side-posts, and would not suffer the destroyer to smite them: and

it was specially commanded them on that night, that none of them should go out at the door of his house, until the morning. Hence it might be deduced, that in manner as pointed out by these types, will the Church be brought into safety, before the vengeance is poured out upon the ungodly. But the Church is not left to collect this important and consolatory truth from types. Isaiah xxvi. represents the Lord speaking thus to his people in that day : " Come my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee : hide thyself, as it were, for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast : for, behold, the Lord cometh out of his place, to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity." Psalm lvii. 1, speaks to the same effect, in clear reference to the Church : and the Lord Jesus, when he was about to go away, told his disciples, that " he would come again, and receive them to himself, and that then their hearts should rejoice." Paul says, " HE shall appear a second time without sin unto salvation," and in that day he shall give " a crown of righteousness to all them that love his appearing." And so also the Lord himself, when prophesying of the latter day, as in Matthew xxiv. and in the corresponding gospels, represents the first act at his second advent to be the gathering of his chosen ones to himself, from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. In conformity

with the preceding statements, the Apocalyptic vision having described, in general terms, the tribulation with which the adversary will be suddenly overwhelmed, upon the unexpected appearance of Messiah, relates the collecting together of the Millennial Church of Christ; and until this is accomplished, the judgments of the ungodly are stayed.—See Rev. vii.

The Apostle Paul, speaking of the second advent in 1 Thess. iv. thus explains the things of that day : “ I would not have you ignorant concerning them that are asleep; for if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend * from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first, then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord.” This Scripture is ex-

* It is worthy of remark, that the prophet Zechariah, in chap. xiv. 3, 4, 5, states the descent of the Lord, as if it would be upon the mount of Olives, from whence he ascended into heaven.

plained further by 1 Cor. xv. 51, et seq. "We shall not all sleep,"—not every individual member of the Church of Christ shall sleep the sleep of death, "but we shall all be changed,"—each one without exception. For the trumpet shall sound, and *the dead* shall be raised incorruptible, and we (who are alive and remain) shall be changed.—And then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, "Death is swallowed up in victory;" for then (as in Rev. xxi. 4.) "there shall be no more death."

It was doubtless in reference to the truth now under consideration, that the Lord Jesus made use of those remarkable words at the grave of Lazarus, "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live, and whosoever liveth and believeth in me, shall never die"—in other words, the believer, though his life be departed, and he sleep the sleep of death, shall be made alive, notwithstanding, according to my word; for I will raise him up at the last day: and he who believeth in me, and remaineth, alive at my coming, shall be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, and shall not pass through death. His vile body shall be changed at once, that it may be fashioned like unto my glorious body, according to the working whereby I am able to subdue all things unto myself. See

Philip. iii. 21.

The Church of the Millennial dispensation will be established upon the mountains of Israel in the latter day, as many Scriptures seem to indicate; and thus the same spot which witnessed the humiliation, and the sufferings of Messiah in the flesh, shall also see his glory. Immediately upon the manifestation of his presence, his light will shine forth in his Church. "He makes bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth see the salvation of our God," Isaiah lii. He will call to his Church, "Awake, awake, put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city"—be clothed with your spiritual bodies, O my people—"Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee," Isaiah lx. An expression in Isaiah lii. seems to refer evidently to the resurrection from the grave: "Shake thyself from the dust: arise and sit down, O Jerusalem, loose thyself from the bands of thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion."—What is the dust here spoken of, but the dust of the mortal body? and the bands are the bands of death. The Church thus raised up, and shining forth with the glory of her Lord, appears, by other Scriptures, to be made the instrument for gathering from out of the nations

of the earth, the elect of God, who are not caught up to meet him in the air. The Scriptures by no means intimate that *all* then on earth, who shall ultimately be saved, shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, upon the manifestation of his second advent. A special reward is spoken of, in that day, to be given to "all them that love his appearing," 2 Tim. iv. 8.—"To them that look for him," Heb. xi. 28.—"To those who are clothed, that the shame of their nakedness do not appear," Rev. iii. 18.—"To them that watch and keep their garments," Rev. xvi. 15.—"To them that may be accounted worthy to escape the things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man," Luke xxi. 36.—"To those servants whom their Lord when he cometh shall find watching,"—Luke xii. 37.—What can be inferred from these and many similar passages, but that some servants will not be found watching? that some of the Lord's people will be found sowing to the flesh; and that some, thinking that the Lord "delayeth his coming," when he doth indeed come, will be found in the very act of smiting their fellow servants, and eating and drinking with the drunken? See Matthew xxiv. 48, et seq. It is no explanation of these Scriptures to assert, as many have done, that the persons here spoken of, cannot be of the Lord's people; they are called *his* servants in express terms—they are

spoken of as being of his household ; and further, in reply to Peter's question in Luke xii. 41. our Lord answers that these things are said expressly to *his* followers, his disciples ; adding, as in v. 45 and 46, that the Lord of that evil servant, who thus transgresses, will come upon that servant when he is not aware, and will cut him off, (see margin,) and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers. This servant is not an unbeliever, yet he hath his portion appointed unto him, even with them. The word of the Lord, notwithstanding, abideth for ever, and it is written, " he that believeth shall be saved ;" and it is again written, in reference to that day, " And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved," Acts ii. 21. May it not, therefore, be inferred, upon a comparison of these Scriptures, that they who are not found watching and walking worthy, will not be allowed to attain the blessed privilege of being caught up to meet the Lord in the air, but will be left in their mortal bodies in the world, to take their portion with the world for a season, and until it shall please the Lord to deliver them ? Some may perhaps think that still heavier judgments are signified.

The parable of the Talents was perhaps intended, amongst other things, to shew the judgment that shall,

in that day, overtake the unprofitable servant, who has neglected to use, and to improve, that which his Lord hath given him. It seems to intimate, that those who, during the state of the Church militant, have been faithful over a few things, shall be made rulers over many things, when Messiah the King reigneth. But that the wicked and slothful servant, who "knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes;" (see Luke xii. 47.) or, according to the words of the parable, shall be cast into outer darkness, (amongst them who are without the pale of the Millennial Church) where shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."—Matthew xxv. 30. The parable of the virgins confirms this view of the subject. All the ten virgins went forth to meet the bridegroom, and while he tarried, they *all* slumbered and slept. Upon the cry at midnight, that they should go out to meet him, the foolish ones found, too late, that they had no oil for their lamps, and while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage, and the door was shut. The others came afterwards, and said, Lord, open unto us, but he answered, "I know you not." In Luke xiii. will be found a corresponding Scripture, in the reply which our Lord gives to the inquiry, "Are they few that be saved?" He cautions them to strive to enter in at the

strait gate, for "many will seek to enter in, and shall not be able, when once the Master of the house is risen up and hath shut to the door." He adds, they shall then begin to stand without and to knock, saying, Lord, open unto us. But he shall tell them he knows them not—they shall urge, that they have eaten and drunk in his presence, and that he has taught in their streets; "but he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence you are, depart from me ye workers of iniquity:"—Surely these are they, who have not kept their garments; and are not found walking worthy. The two next verses make it evident, that the time of the second advent is particularly spoken of in this passage, for they who thus stand without, are described as seeing Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, whilst they are themselves thrust out; and whilst many come from the east, and the west, and the north, and the south, and sit down in the kingdom of God. The passage has, doubtless, a primary or incidental reference to the gathering of the Gentiles into the gospel Church, from which the Jews were excluded, and so it has been explained figuratively by commentators; but the direct reference is to the Millennial Church, in which the risen Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, with the apostles, elders, and all faithful servants of the Lamb, "shall live and reign with

Christ a thousand years," Rev. xx. 4, which is explained to be "for ever and ever," *εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων* unto the ages of the ages—Rev. xxii. 5. To confirm this, it should be remembered that the gospel Church is, in many things, the type of the Millennial Church; even as the dispensation of the law under Moses, was "the figure for the time then present, having a shadow of good things to come" in the days of the gospel, and of the Millennium; and therefore the Scriptures which refer to the one, must necessarily, at the same time, speak also of the other, and they will be found applicable alike to explain circumstances which belong to each. Taking, then, these Scriptures as they stand, and following them in their obvious signification, in reference to the reward promised at the time when Messiah cometh, the exhortations unto good words, which abound in every part of the Sacred Volume, acquire an additional importance.

If the gospels and epistles are carefully examined, it will be found, that exhortations unto good works are most generally given with some reference to the second advent, and as if conveying a special promise to them whose walk shall be approved at that time. In the epistle to the Ephesians, Paul exhorts, iv. 1. "I beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation, wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meek-

ness," &c. Continuing the subject, he adds in the next chapter, "Walk in love, as Christ hath loved us:" and then, speaking of some particular sins, he says, verse 6, "Let no man deceive you with vain words, for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience: Be not ye therefore *partakers with them*." Does not this afford a plain intimation, that they who believe in Jesus, and confess unto his name, shall not escape without stripes, if they follow after their own devices, and are so found when he cometh? So in Colossians iii. the apostle says, "when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory. Mortify, *therefore*, your members which are upon the earth."—Is not, then, this mortification necessary? Again, in 1 Thess. iii. Paul says, "The Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, to the end he may establish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints." Something to the same effect is repeated in chapter v. and he there concludes his exhortation with a prayer, that "their whole spirit, soul, and body, may be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord." 2 Thess. i. 6—12, is equally explicit: and in his first epistle to Timothy vi. 11—14, he charges him to keep the com-

mandment unto good works "without spot, unrebukable unto the Lord's appearing." The apostle James, v. 8, exhorts the Church, "Be ye patient; stablish your hearts," adding as a motive, "for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh." And so Peter, in 1 Pet. i. 7, speaking of temptations, observes, that this "trial of their faith will be found unto praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of Christ." And in 2 Pet. iii. 11, after mentioning the second advent, he asks, most significantly, what manner of persons ought we then to be, looking for and hasting unto the coming of that day?"


It is written, Rom. xiv. 10, "We shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ." Again, 2 Cor. v. 10, "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, whether they be good or evil. Jude 14, 15, is to the same purpose. It is also written, Matt. vii. 1, "Judge not, that ye be not judged: for with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged." And 1 Cor. xi. 31, "If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged; but when we are judged we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world." These things are addressed to the Church. The Lord's revealed purpose is "to purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous

of good works."—"They are builded together for a habitation of God through the Spirit." They are made "the temple of the living God"—the promise is, "my grace is sufficient for thee," and God hath said, "I will dwell in them and walk in them." The works, therefore, which are pleasing to the Lord, are his *own* works in his people. His promise to them is, *unto good works*: and unless their faith fail, they shall surely abound therein. We who believe, shall acknowledge that "He hath wrought all our works in us." The parable of the sheep and the goats, Matt. xxv. describes the judgment of Messiah, when he sits upon the throne of his glory, at the second advent. It is there represented as a judgment according to works, and it will certainly be found, in that day, that the Lord's elect are the only ones, by whom good works have at any time been wrought; for to them, and to them only, does he give "to will and to do of his good pleasure." Let it not in any wise be imagined, that the view here taken, militates in the most remote degree, against the doctrines of free and sovereign grace; every part of Scripture is alike a portion of God's truth; it is only as we understand them not, that we think one part seems opposed to the other.

This subject is of vast importance as a matter of interest to each individual, and therefore it will be

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profitable that Christians should inquire for themselves, searching the Scriptures whether these things be so ; seeking, through the Spirit of God, the knowledge of his truth in this matter. It is only as they know not the Scriptures, that men do err concerning divine things, and we have a sure word of promise, that he who seeketh shall find. And, moreover, it is written, "If any lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all liberally, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him."



CHAP. XXXI.

The In-gathering of the Church.

The gathering of the Lord's remnant in the flesh, from out of the nations of the earth, has been described in Rev. vii. The four angels, who stand upon the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, are commanded not to hurt the earth till all the servants of God are sealed. But they are not only to be sealed—to receive the Lord's mark of adoption—but they must also be brought forth from the world that lieth in the wicked one, whose end is to be burned.

It has been already seen, that when the Son of Man cometh in the clouds of heaven, he shall send forth his angels to gather his elect—his sealed ones. The elect to be thus gathered cannot, therefore, be they who are caught up to meet the Lord in the air, for such will at once form part of his triumphant army. As this prophecy is future, who or what may be the angels who shall be sent forth, remains to be seen in that day.

If it might, however, be permitted to hazard a conjecture upon this hidden subject, it might be asked, as matter of inquiry, whether the manner of our Lord's appearance upon earth to his disciples after his resurrection, and before his ascension, might not probably have been ordained to afford us a glimpse of the dispensation, which shall be revealed in that day ; either as a type or figure of it ; or, as a more clear manifestation of things that shall then be brought to pass.

The Lord Jesus arose from the dead on the third day after his crucifixion, very early in the morning of the first day of the week, for "it was yet dark." He spake to Mary Magdalene, by her name "Mary," and revealed himself to her, as she was without the sepulchre ; and she "came and told the disciples." And "the same day at evening, when the doors were shut, where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst ; and saith unto them, Peace be unto you ; and when he had so said, he shewed unto them his hands and his side." And upon this occasion, as appears by Luke's gospel, he asked, "Have ye any meat ? And they gave him a piece of broiled fish, and of an honeycomb, and he took it, and did eat before them." Thomas was not with them when Jesus thus came ;

he refused to credit their report. But "after eight days again the disciples were within, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you. Then saith he to Thomas, reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands ; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side, and be not faithless, but believing. And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God !" "As two of them went to Emmaus, Jesus drew near and went with them, but their eyes were holden that they should not know him,"—but afterwards "their eyes were opened,"—and "he was known of them in the breaking of bread."

The appearance of our Lord upon the occasions just referred to, is not unlike his appearance before his incarnation unto Abraham in the plains of Mamre, with whom he did then eat. He appeared also at other times in the like manner, as related in the Old Testament, and this doubtless was intended to signify to us, amongst other things, the identity of the Word, who was made flesh, and dwelt amongst us ; and to shew that he was the same both before and after his incarnation,—“the same yesterday, to day, and for ever.” It is written, when next he “shall appear we shall be like him ;” and if so, the risen saints, made

like unto their glorious master, as he shewed himself on the occasions referred to, might well be sent to mix with the children of men who still remain in the flesh, for the purpose of gathering his elect children from amongst the children of the evil one, even "from the four corners of the earth." A passage in Zech. xiii. is, perhaps, not unfavourable to this opinion. It is there said, "the Lord in that day will cause the prophets and the unclean spirit to pass out of the land." "And the prophets shall be ashamed every one of his vision when he hath prophesied; neither shall they wear a rough garment to deceive"—or, as in the margin, "a garment of hair to lie." This is a plain intimation that the inventions and commandments of men shall then no longer be allowed to usurp the place of God's truth; but that they who shall then be commissioned to declare that truth, shall not mix it with any human leaven; and it should seem that this could hardly be brought to pass, if the angels sent forth at this time, were only such men as ourselves.

But it is, perhaps, of no great importance to inquire by what instruments the Lord's people shall be gathered to him at this season, for the word angel, as used in the Scriptures in relation to that day, may admit of various interpretations. It is only by the

result, that this can be known ; and it will be more desirable to ascertain what is written in the word of truth, regarding the circumstances under which the Church will be gathered. Concerning the fact of this promised deliverance, the prophets speak very plainly, and as they use terms which may be applied as well to the remnant of Israel and Judah after the flesh, as to the remnant in the flesh of the true Israel of God according to the election of grace, it was probably intended that they should be taken in this two-fold application.

The deliverance of the children of Israel from Egypt was manifestly a figure of the latter-day deliverance, as appears by Isaiah xi. 16. and Jeremiah xvi. 14. and xxiii. 7. This was a deliverance with signs and wonders, and with a stretched-out arm ; and so will be the deliverance which is to come. The Lord, in bringing them out from Egypt, having commanded his people to stay within their chamber, feeding upon the paschal lamb, at midnight he smote the Egyptians, and then they let the people go. As the Israelites went forth, they spoiled the Egyptians, even as the Lord commanded. And at that time against any of the children of Israel, not a dog durst move his tongue, against man or beast ; that it might be known how the Lord doth put a difference between the

Egyptians and Israel.—And not a hoof was left behind. It may be observed, that the time of their sojourning in Egypt was 430 years. The times of the Church in mystic Babylon extend to thrice this period, 1290 years.

The ark of Noah affords another type of the Church, in the day of the destruction of the ungodly, as our Lord himself has explained. Noah and his family, and the beasts, and the fowls, and all the creeping things went in. They went in without hindrance and without molestation from any one, and as soon as they were in safety, the flood came; “and the waters increased and bare up the ark”—“and the ark went upon the face of the waters.” In neither of these instances were those who received the deliverance exposed to peril or to reproach. They were brought forth into safety, in the way the Lord appointed, and without any further act or exertion on their part, but merely their going forward into the place that was shewn unto them by the Lord. There is a particular circumstance, in the early history of the Church, which seems intended to guide us into a knowledge of latter times, and which was prophesied of, by the Lord Jesus, in terms which seem to give to it this bearing. In Matt. xxiv. 15—26, our Lord speaks of a flight from Judea, at a time “when the abomination of

desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, shall stand in the holy place." It is not impossible, that a further setting up of the Roman abomination, remains yet to be manifested : and if so, it must necessarily be under the going forth of the three frogs, of Rev. xvi. 13. see p. 253. This would probably afford a more complete developement of the infidel beast, of Rev. xvii. 4. But, however this may be, the primary signification of Matt. xxiv. 15. is doubtless the siege of Jerusalem, from the troubles and destruction of which the first Christians were delivered under circumstances peculiarly providential. That another deliverance is also pointed at, is clear from the language which is used. The Christians in those days passed out from that ill-fated city in quietness and in peace into a place of security ; and so may we expect the Church to be again led forth from the tents of the ungodly, in the last times. Isaiah lii. is very clear upon this point. " The Lord hath made bare his holy arm in the sight of all the nations"—and addressing the Church, he says, " Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence, touch no unclean thing : go ye out of the midst of *her*, (that is, out of the midst of Babylon, as explained in Rev. xviii. 4) For ye shall not go out with haste, nor go by flight : for the Lord will go before you, and the God of Israel shall be your rereward." And so also Isaiah lv. 12.

“Ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace.” Micah ii. 12, 13. is, if possible, even more explicit—“I will surely assemble, O Jacob, all of thee; I will surely gather the remnant of Israel: I will put them together as the sheep of Bozrah, as the flock in the midst of their fold. They shall make a great noise by reason of the multitude of men. The breaker is come up before them, they have broken up, and have passed through the gate, and are gone out by it: and their king shall pass before them, and the Lord on the head of them.”

Two other classes of Scripture texts, which are generally considered as referring to the latter-day deliverance, appear of doubtful application; but they must not be passed over without notice. In Isaiah xli. it is written, “Fear not, thou worm Jacob, and ye men of Israel: I will help thee, saith the Lord, and thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel. Behold, I will make thee a new sharp threshing instrument, having teeth. Thou shalt thresh the mountains, and beat them small, and shalt make the hills as chaff. Thou shalt fan them, and the wind shall carry them away, and the whirlwind shall scatter them.” So in Micah iv. 3. “Arise and thresh, O daughter of Zion, for I will make thine horn iron, and I will make thy hoofs brass, and thou shalt beat in pieces many people.”

So also in Zech. xii. "In that day I will make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people."—"In that day will I make the governors of Judah like an hearth of fire among the wood, and like a torch of fire in a sheaf; they shall devour all the people round about, on the right hand and on the left." Again, in Malachi iv. "Ye shall tread down the wicked, for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet, in the day that I shall do this, saith the Lord of Hosts." These Scriptures, with others of like import, particularly Rev. xviii. 6. have been thought to favour the opinion, that in the latter-day deliverance, the Church shall execute vengeance upon her enemies. As the fulfilment is yet to come, it is not possible to aver that it may not be of this kind. But as the judgment upon the ungodly is not executed till after the Church is brought to Zion, it seems more congenial with the general tenor of other Scriptures, to refer these passages also to the judgment which shall be manifested, after the Church is brought into her rest, concerning which, more will be said in its proper place.

It is to be remarked further, that Isaiah xliii. 5. says, "I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west: I will say to the north, give up, and to the south, keep not back: bring my sons from afar, and my daughters from the ends of the earth."—Isaiah

xlix. 21. "They shall bring thy sons in their arms, and thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders, and kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and queens thy nursing mothers; they shall bow down to thee with their face toward the earth, and shall lick the dust of thy feet."—And so again, Isaiah lxvi. 20. "And they shall bring again all your brethren for an offering unto the Lord out of all nations, upon horses, and in chariots, and in litters, and upon mules, and upon swift beasts, to my holy mountain Jerusalem, saith the Lord." The reader will judge for himself, upon examining these last-mentioned passages with their contexts, and with the other corresponding Scriptures, whether they do not rather refer to the time, when "the kings and the nations of the earth, shall bring their glory and honour into" the Millennial Church, after she has sat down in her rest, than to the Lord's remnant in the flesh, during their deliverance, and whilst travelling towards their rest. Different opinions are entertained, and no one, perhaps, is very competent to declare the exact fulfilment.



CHAP. XXXII.

Messiah's Judgment.

The fourteenth chapter of Revelations describes the harvest and the vintage. The parable of the tares in Matthew xiii. refers also to the same events. There is a trifling variation, however, of the order in which the events are spoken of in these two places. In Rev. xiv. the harvest, or collecting together of his redeemed ones, is mentioned first.—In the parable, it should seem that the tares are first collected, and bound up into bundles to be burned: and in the explanation, in verse 43, it is said, “*Then* shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.”—Matt. iii. 12, quoting from Mal. iii. 3. describes the Lord Jesus as coming with his fan in his hand, “and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into his garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire:” and in that day every plant which God hath not planted will be rooted up.

The going forth of Messiah in the latter day, is described in Rev. xix.

The eleventh verse begins the subject ; and to preserve the context entire, the chapter should have commenced at that verse ; for the preceding portion of it belongs to the subject of the eighteenth chapter, and describes the rejoicing of the Church over the fall of the mystic Babylon, which fall is related in the eighteenth ; and is again briefly adverted to, in the latter part of the nineteenth chapter, for the purpose of shewing, that although the ten kings of the earth shall hate the whore, and make her desolate, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire, (Rev. xvii. 16.) yet that this will be brought to pass, at the time of the manifestation of the immediate presence of Messiah, who cometh to take vengeance. He is described as going forth, seated upon a white horse. In vain do the kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord, and against his Anointed." Ps. ii. 2.—In vain do "the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gather together to make war against HIM that sitteth upon the horse, and against His army." Rev. xix. 19. "The Lord shall laugh them to scorn."—The application of these Scriptures is plain ; and Ezekiel also speaks of the same events, under the names of Gog and Magog, in chapters xxxviii. and xxxix. The last chapter of Zechariah, and Joel iii. speak of them likewise, as do others of the prophets.—The expression of Joel in

verse 9, is, "sanctify war," (see margin) as if to denote a contest of a religious kind : and Zechariah shews that the enemies are smitten with an immediate destruction from the Lord. The Gog and Magog of Ezekiel are smitten in like manner, and they are by no means to be confounded with the Gog and Magog of Rev. xx. for these come forth at the end of the Millennial dispensation, and not at the commencement : but the Gog and Magog of Ezekiel are at the commencement of it, and before the latter-day temple, or Millennial Church, is built up. Without transcribing the passages, it is difficult to give the full effect of them ; and, therefore, it may be better that the reader should himself refer to them. The Lord's sacrifice in Bozrah, even his great slaughter in the land of Idumea, or Edom, spoken of in Isaiah xxxiv. is the same event, and it will be seen that Messiah is described in Isaiah lxiii. as coming up from this very slaughter, after having trodden *there, in Edom*, without the city of God, "the wine-press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God." See Rev. xiv. 20, and xix. 15.

It seems the general opinion, that the vengeance which is spoken of in the Scriptures here referred to, is upon certain armies of men, who join together as soldiers, to fight against Messiah and his army. It may be asked, whether it is possible that any should

be found so hardy as to engage in such a warfare. But, on the other hand, if the Lord so ordain, instruments will certainly be found: it may be, that their eyes shall be blinded, so that at this time they may not know him to be Messiah; and if, as a modern commentator thinks, Buonaparte is again to be released, he might prove himself a fit leader of such an expedition: still, however, it would not follow, according to the general opinion, that the destruction of that day will be confined to the armies thus assembled. A further examination of Scripture leads to the conclusion, that a far greater calamity is prophesied of; and that the ruin will be as disastrous and almost as extensive as that in the days of Noah. Our Lord compares it to the days of Noah—He says, “except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved.” And Paul says, 2 Thess. i. that the vengeance of that day will be upon them that know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ—which description must necessarily include many who could not be gathered together unto the battle. The apostle Peter speaks, if possible, in more direct terms, from which it may be collected, that the present heavens and earth are kept in store, reserved unto fire, against *that day*; and that they will be as completely destroyed by fire, as they were before by water; and then there shall be made new

heavens and a new earth, wherein righteousness shall dwell. And this is also declared in the most express terms, in Rev. xxi. 1, 4, 5.

But it is not only in the Scriptures just adduced, that these awful things are revealed; many others will be found equally explicit—the Book of Psalms, especially, in passages almost without number. In chap. xiii. of Isaiah, the kingdoms of the nations are said to be gathered together—a destruction shall come from the Almighty. He will punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity. To describe the extent of the destruction, it explains, that he will make a weak, infirm man in the flesh, ~~more~~ more precious than the fine gold, even a man of the earth ~~more~~ more precious than the golden wedge of Ophir; and I will shake the heavens, and the earth shall remove out of her place. Again, in Isaiah xxiv. “Fear and the pit and the snare are upon thee, O inhabitant of the earth—for the windows from on high are open, and the foundations of the earth do shake: the earth is utterly broken down, the earth is clean dissolved.” And in Isaiah xxxiv, “All the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and they shall be rolled together as a scroll;” and xli. 6. “The heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein

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shall die in like manner,"—which passages are explained by the Apostle Paul in Heb. i. with reference to Messiah coming in the latter day to *change* the heavens and the earth. It seems hardly possible to describe a more complete destruction than that which is here spoken of; nevertheless, it is written, that in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, that is, in the place where the Lord's presence is manifested, there shall be deliverance, and that whoso calleth upon his name shall be delivered; and again, "Ye shall be gathered one by one, ye children of Israel," Isaiah xxvii. 12. The context from which this last passage is taken, shews that it relates to the deliverance of the last days, when the great trumpet is blown: and they shall come, who were ready to perish in the land of Assyria, and were outcasts in the land of Egypt—alluding, doubtless, to the Lord's remnant in the flesh, whom he will collect together in the appointed place of safety in that day. This is again confirmed by Zeph. ii. 3. where the nation *not desirous*, (see margin)—the nation which did not desire, but rejected Messiah, is thus called upon to gather itself together, before the day of the Lord's fierce anger come upon them—"Seek ye the Lord—It may be ye shall be hid in the day of the Lord's fierce anger." The context makes it evident that Messiah's coming is the day referred to.

The preceding references shew that the renewing of the heavens and the earth, is spoken of continually in those parts of the Sacred Volume which treat of their destruction in the latter day. This renewing is the restitution of all things, the refreshing from the presence of the Lord, which Peter in Acts ii. declares shall take place at the second coming of Jesus Christ. The Lord saith of it in Isaiah lxvi. 22. "The new heavens and the new earth which I will make, shall remain before me;" and these are the peaceable habitations, the sure dwellings, and the quiet resting places, which are promised to the Lord's people. The faculties of man are wholly unequal to comprehend the blessings and the glories of that rest; for "Since the beginning of the world, (saith the prophet) men have not heard nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside thee, what he (Messiah) hath prepared for him that waiteth for him."

One great change, ordained to take place in the long wished for season of refreshing, is the entire removal of the curse. In order that this object may be effected, it seems necessary that the enemy who beguiled the woman, and thus brought in the curse, should be bound, lest the Church of Christ should again be afflicted through his machinations. The twentieth


chapter of Revelations represents this binding of the evil one, who is cast into the bottomless pit, and the Lord's seal is set upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, until the Millennial dispensation is ended, after which he must be loosed a little season. The angel who inflicts the sentence, is the same who saith of himself in Rev. i. 18. "I am he that liveth, and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore, Amen, and have the keys of death and hell."

If it shall indeed be found, that the Lord Jesus cometh with power and great glory, at the close of the 1290 years, whenever that period may be, it may be collected from the twelfth chapter of Daniel, as already remarked, that the 45 years will be occupied in fulfilling the several events which have been treated of, and which, according to Scripture, must take place before the Church sits down finally in her rest: viz. the resurrection of the departed saints, the gathering of the Lord's remnant in the flesh from out of the tents of the ungodly, the judgment of the wicked by Messiah, the binding of Satan, the removal of the curse, and the changing of the present heavens and earth, so that they may again be such as they were when it was said of them, that God saw that they were good. Between the law and the gospel, there was a sort of intermediate dispensation, during which

the one passed away, and merged into the other. This era commenced with the ministry of John the Baptist in the wilderness, and continued until the Lord's resurrection. The period of 45 years will probably be found in like manner something intermediate between the gospel and Millennium, extending from the first manifestation of the Son of Man, or of his forerunner, the latter-day Elijah, until the complete establishment of the Millennial Church. All this remains to be developed, but it seems clearly intimated in the type of David and Solomon remaining upon the throne together for some time, after Solomon was anointed king in Gihon, that some new dispensation of a mixed kind will take place in the first instance, and that the one will sink into the other.

The Lord's risen saints live and reign with him a thousand years, even for the hidden ages; and the revelation which is given concerning the nature and circumstances of those times must form the subject of another chapter. But it is revealed to us that the rest of the dead, who have not their part in the first resurrection, shall not live again till the thousand years are finished. When that era is expired, whatever may prove to be the duration of it, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and he shall go out to deceive the nations, which are in the four quarters of

the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle. These nations, like their type, the Gog and Magog of Ezekiel, shall "go up upon the breadth of the earth, and compass the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city," and then fire coming down from God out of heaven shall devour them. And the devil that deceived them shall be cast into the lake of fire. And when this is accomplished, the second resurrection and judgment will take place.



CHAP. XXXIII.

First and Second Resurrection.

An accurate understanding of what the Scriptures reveal of the first and second resurrection, is very necessary for assisting the inquiry into the things of the second advent. Each resurrection is attended with a judgment of the ungodly. But the loose way in which the judgment of the wicked is spoken of by many writers, has induced a general persuasion, amongst those who follow the opinions of men, that there is only one resurrection and judgment. When the Lord Jesus cometh in the clouds of heaven, the dead will be raised, and judgment will be passed upon them, as every one seems to acknowledge. But it is clear that *all* the dead will not then be raised, for some shall not live again till after the end of the Millennial dispensation—"until the thousand years are finished." If, therefore, the Lord indeed cometh at the commencement of the Millennium, as before contended for, it follows that there must be two judgments, for He himself executes judgment at His coming, and there is to be another resurrection, and another judgment after the end of the thousand years.

The Apostle Paul, 1 Cor. xv. 25, declares that Messiah must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet: and in the parable of the Ten Servants, (Luke xix. 11.) the first act of the Lord after having received the kingdom, and after having reckoned with His own servants, is to command that His enemies, who would not that He should reign over them, should be brought and slain before Him.

The Lord Jesus will judge the quick and the dead at his coming, but it is certain from Scripture, that he will not then judge *all* the dead; and regarding those who are in the flesh, it seems to be upon them a judgment only in the flesh; for it is not intimated, that any are then changed to receive judgment in their spirits, according to the things done in the body. The prophet Daniel, speaking of that day, says, that many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt; thus expressly shewing, that all shall not rise; and that amongst them who do rise, there shall be wicked ones, raised unto condemnation. The parable of the Sheep and the Goats, (Matt. xxv.) shews a resurrection of the wicked in that day; and the context will not allow the parable to be referred to any other time than that of the second advent. The blessed of the Father are called to

inherit the kingdom prepared for them ; consequently, the thousand years are not fulfilled ; for these blessed ones of the Father are brought into possession of their kingdom, at the commencement of the Millennium.

When Messiah takes the rule, there shall be no more Canaanite left in the land, as the Psalms also declare. " All the wicked shall be cut off"—but it is not said that all the wicked shall then receive their final doom. The enemies of Messiah are to be judged — " they who have pierced him ;" amongst whom may principally be reckoned, they who have persecuted and destroyed his people ; for he is the Head, and his people are members of one mystical body—The Church : and therefore he said to Saul of Tarsus, " Why persecutest thou *me* ?" . Acts ix. 4.

An inaccurate view will be formed of Messiah's judgment, if the idea of it is restricted to the mere wreaking of vengeance upon the ungodly. Although the day of Messiah is called in Isaiah lxi. 2. " the day of vengeance of my God," and in that sense it is called his judgment, yet in many passages of Scripture that word signifies rule, government, and the declaration and establishment of truth, to the over-

throwing of lies and falsehood. Truly, the righteous judgment of God by Messiah, must reprove every one, without exception; for it will detect and make manifest the refuge of lies, in which each individual has more or less rested and delighted. It will be found that all have departed from the truth, and that every son and daughter of Adam has come very far indeed short of the glory of God. This, in many places, is the obvious sense in which the word is used, although, in other passages, and perhaps more generally, it is used to signify condemnation. But the judgment of God in this matter, as well as in executing wrath, is evidently committed to the Son, that men should honour his judgment, even as that of the Father.

The first resurrection and judgment are then those of Messiah, The Prince. He executes vengeance upon his enemies as he finds them, whether in the flesh, or asleep in the dust of the earth; and he reveals the righteousness of God to the confusion of ungodly men. He will, moreover, rule and judge his people in righteousness, during the glorious times of his reign, which it is unreasonable to consider as being limited to a thousand years, such as years are now; inasmuch as the accuracy of Scripture is at an end, if we assume that the words year and day, are used as

convertible or synonymous terms in the same book of prophecy, denoting each of them the same space of time. Messiah takes the government upon his shoulder, and he rules for the appointed season: after which, Satan being loosed, the nations of the earth will be deceived, and turned in rebellion against their Maker. Then comes the Father's judgment; Messiah having laid down the sceptre, and delivered up the kingdom to the Father, God is become all in all; and he sends forth his fire from heaven, to devour those who are gathered together against his Church. The vengeance of eternal fire is poured upon the devil who deceived them; but, for any thing the text intimates, it *may be* upon them a judgment only in the flesh: for whether they are the seed of the serpent ordained unto final condemnation, or whether they have only been led astray by him, seems not clearly revealed.

Upon this vengeance being executed the day of the second judgment draws nigh; and, as a preparatory step, the Great White Throne is set, and He who sitteth upon it, is revealed. To shew that this will be the final destruction of the present mundane system, it is written in Rev. xx. 11. that from the face of Him who is upon the throne, "the earth and the heavens fled away, and there was found no place for them."

These expressions are widely different from those which are used in reference to the advent of Messiah, and the purification of the heavens and the earth by fire, at the time of the first resurrection ; and from not paying due attention to this difference, much confusion has arisen. The wrath of the Lamb, and the wrath of God, can hardly refer to one and the same thing : and when it is seen that the wrath of the Lamb is spoken of as at one period, and the judgment of God as at another, a further distinction is marked.

It has been suggested that the second judgment is of the Father : it matters little, in the present day, to inquire strictly whether it shall be of the Father or of Christ ; but it is proper to notice one or two points connected with it, lest the truth in other things should be lost sight of. At this time of the second resurrection, all the dead are raised. During the Millennial era there is no death. Rev. xxi. 4. So that they who are raised at the second resurrection, are those who were left behind at the first ; and who were cut off by Messiah at his coming. May there not be, then, amongst them, those evil servants, to whom the Lord, in righteous judgment, and in reward for their evil deeds, hath appointed a portion with the hypocrites ; and who, inasmuch as

they had departed from him, were not permitted to see the glories of his reign ? It appears very clearly, that those who remain unto the second resurrection are not all finally condemned. The books are opened—*possibly* the books of remembrance—and another book is opened, which is the book of life—and they are judged according to the things written in the books, according to their works ; and whosoever is not found written in the book of life, is cast into the lake of fire. Rev. xx. 15. Here again is a judgment according to works, and reference is made to the book of life, apparently, as if to ascertain in such instances as might otherwise be thought doubtful, whether the works of the individuals were wrought of God or not, for *his* works only can be acknowledged. But the things of the second judgment are, at present, very far off, and Scripture rather alludes to them than states them. When the Milleennial dispensation is brought in, there will, doubtless, be a further revelation. In the mean-time, let us watch in hope, waiting for the glories of that day, standing upon the rock of our salvation, where no evil can reach us.

CHAP. XXXIV.

Conclusion.

The work of righteousness is peace, with quietness and assurance for ever : and The Lord keepeth them in perfect peace, whose minds are stayed upon Him. The prophet Isaiah speaks much of the glories of Messiah's day, and Ezekiel describes them with more minuteness in those latter chapters, which treat of the things of the new dispensation, and are now hard to be understood. But the two last chapters of the Apocalypse contain, perhaps, the plainest revelation of these things, which yet has been set before us.

“ Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them ” — “ His servants shall see his face, and his name shall be in their foreheads ” — “ And the city hath no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God doth lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.” All these are things of which we can form no distinct idea ; but the personal presence of Messiah, dwelling amongst his servants upon earth, in the midst of his holy city, with an open manifestation of his glory, is certainly

revealed as a matter of plain truth, if language has any meaning. If expressions, such as these, can signify nothing more than the improvement of the moral and religious condition of mankind, under a state of things like that which now obtains, it would almost lead to the conclusion that Scripture has no determinate meaning. Far be it from any of us to turn aside from that which God hath revealed unto us, for the joy and peace of our souls, and to our great and endless comfort. Is there any thing too hard for the Lord? Shall not *his* counsel stand for ever? But it will be profitable to trace out the particulars set before us in Holy Writ.

The heavens and earth being renewed, and no more sea, Rev. xxi. 1. the surface of the earth will be very considerably enlarged by the addition of those parts which are now covered by the waters; and the world will be repeopled. "The Lord will pour his Spirit upon the seed, and his blessing upon the offspring of Jacob."—There will be a great increase of men in the land, in the midst of which the new Jerusalem is placed; for "they shall say, the place is too strait for me: give place to me that I may dwell"—"For (Judea) the land of their destruction shall be too narrow by reason of the inhabitants."—"The Lord will comfort Zion, and will make her wilderness

like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord. Joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving and the voice of melody."—"And their seed shall be known among the Gentiles, and their offspring among the people: all that see them shall acknowledge them, that they are the seed which the Lord hath blessed."

The Book of Psalms dwells continually upon the reign and glories of Messiah, more so, perhaps, than any other equal portion of Scripture. It has already been remarked, that more than one third of the Psalms refer directly to the second advent. Psalms xxii. xxxvii. xcvi. xcvi. xcvi. xcvi. ci. cii. cxxxii. cxxxvii. and cxlix. deserve particularly to be noticed, in reference to their testimony concerning the judgment and reign of Messiah. From these Psalms it may be collected, that all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before Messiah The King; that his saints shall be preserved for ever, but the seed of the wicked shall be cut off, and the righteous shall inherit the land: that all the people shall see his glory: that when he cometh to judge the earth, a fire goeth before him, and burneth up his enemies round about: that he will destroy all the wicked of the land: that his name shall be declared in Zion, his praise in Jerusalem, and all the people shall be gathered

together, and the kingdoms to serve the Lord : that he hath chosen Zien for his habitation, and Zion is his rest for ever.

That, during the glorious times now spoken of, the race and the nations of men will continue upon earth in the flesh, is abundantly clear, as well from the preceding as from other Scriptures. The Lord formed the earth to be inhabited, (Isaiah xlv. 18.) and, considering the extent of the desolate places, and the portion of it which is covered by the water, this has never yet been fulfilled. There shall yet be old men and old women dwelling in Jerusalem, and the streets shall be full of boys and girls playing ; (Zech. viii.) which promise, taken in its context, belongs clearly to the Millennial dispensation. All nations and tongues shall come and see his glory ; from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, all flesh shall come to worship before him, (Isaiah lxvi.) and every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem, shall even go up to Jerusalem, from year to year, to worship the King, the Lord of Hosts. (Zech. xiv.) In consonance with the foregoing Scriptures the Book of Revelations declares, that the nations of them that are saved shall walk in the light of the New Jerusalem, and the kings of the earth shall bring their glory and

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honour into it. And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, nor the light of the sun, for the Lord God giveth them light; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any pain; for the former things are passed away, and behold, the Lord maketh all things new!

The thoughts of man are bewildered when he would contemplate the glories that have been spoken of, but it much concerns us to know who shall be allowed to partake of them. Rev. xx. 4. points out those who shall reign with Messiah; and they are described as they who "were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which have not worshipped the beast, neither his image, nor have received his mark upon their foreheads, nor in their hands"—these live and reign with him. It is also written, Rev. xxi. 7. "He that overcometh shall inherit all things, and I will be his God, and he shall be my son." And another Scripture saith, "this is the victory that overcometh, even our faith." Taking these Scriptures together, it may be inferred, that the faithful sufferers for Christ's sake will *reign* in Messiah's kingdom; and the Apostle Paul favours such interpretation. The captain of our salvation was made perfect through sufferings. He was bap-

tized with the baptism of sufferings, he drank of the cup of afflictions, and so likewise his people: for they drink of the same cup, and are baptized with the same baptism. His flesh was crucified on the tree, and they that are Christ's, have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. Much stress was laid by the early Christians upon the necessity of suffering. Thus the Apostles, after they had been beaten by command of the Jewish Council, "rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name." Acts vi. 41. They taught also in many cities, that "we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God." Acts xiv. And it has been seen that they who are described in Rev. vii. as having white robes, and with palms in their hands, in token of victory, came out of great tribulation. The Apostle Paul reminds the Philippians that it was given unto them on behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but to suffer for his sake: and, speaking of the patience and faith of the Thessalonians, in all their persecutions and tribulations, he observes, that it is a manifest token that they may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which they also suffer. A passage in 2 Tim. ii. is still more explicit. "If we suffer, we shall also reign with him," which is said, in other words, in Rom. viii. 17. Is it, then, too much to infer from these and other similar Scriptures, that

sufferings for Christ's sake are necessary for all who shall share the glories of his kingdom : and that where there is no suffering, there will be no reign ?

Another important point arises out of the foregoing statement—they live and *reign* with Christ. It may be asked, will not some live, who will not also *reign* ? The term signifies exaltation—an advancement in Christ's kingdom. If some reign, there must be others over whom they reign. How shall they be kings without subjects ? And does not this necessarily predicate a difference between some and others in that day ? Many parts of Scripture cannot easily be reconciled, without admitting that in the times to come, there will be a diversity of station and of honour. The servant who hath been faithful over a few things shall be made ruler over many things. He whose pound gaineth ten pounds, receiveth authority over ten cities : he whose pound has gained five pounds, shall be placed over five cities. “ He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet, shall receive a prophet's reward ; and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man, shall receive a righteous man's reward : and whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, shall in no wise lose his reward.” Matt. x. 41, 42. The con-

text shews plainly that all this refers to the Millennial times. The promise to the twelve apostles was, that, in the dispensation to come, they should sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. All who shall then live and reign with him, are not apostles, and therefore all are not on these twelve thrones : and these thrones declare a pre-eminence above others, unto which every one *cannot* attain. Many other Scriptures also declare the apportioning of a special reward. It is not meant to assert, but it is suggested as an object of inquiry, whether there be not a clear revelation of a reward according to works in the Millennial reign, however little some eminent divines of the day may, at this time, be aware of such revelation. That era is the time of the exaltation, and of the glory of Messiah, and his bride, the Church. He cometh as King of kings, and Lord of lords, and "He shall put down all rule, and authority, and power, and he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet." During his reign his faithful servants will be exalted, and whosoever shall confess him before men, him will he confess before his Father and the angels ; and whosoever shall deny him before men, him will he also deny. And it has been already shewn that his reign is the time for the reward, even as Rev. xiii. 18, also declares

that then a reward shall be given "unto his servants, and the prophets, and them that fear his name, small and great."

Ezekiel's vision of the latter-day temple is a revelation of the times that have been spoken of, and although little of it can now be understood, enough may be collected from it to shew, that in the Millennial Church there will be different stations, and degrees of honour under the same king Messiah, even as under the Gospel there have been diversities of gifts to his people, by the same Spirit. The joy of all will be full, but "one star differeth from another star in glory." And when the angel said to Daniel, that in that day "they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever," he meant, doubtless, to convey this idea, for the words import a difference of glory and dignity. A short reference to the latter chapters of Ezekiel, may, perhaps, place the subject in a still clearer light. It is not to be doubted that these chapters represent the Church in Millennial glory. No condition of the Church has yet been seen which in any degree assimilates itself to what is there represented, and the time being still future, and agreeing with what in other places is written of the per-

sonal reign of Messiah the Prince, it can be referred to no other times : for we have no revelation of what is to succeed to the Millennium.

Ezekiel xl. describes the measure of the temple and of its chambers, with the uses and dimensions of each : v. 45 and 46, speak of two particular chambers, one of which, "whose prospect is toward the south, is for the priests, the keepers of the charge of the house : " the other toward the north, is "for the priests, the keepers of the charge of the altar. These are the sons of Zadok among the sons of Levi, which come near unto the Lord to minister unto him." Here is a manifest distinction between the two sets of priests ; the one coming nearer to the person of the Lord, and enjoying the light of his countenance more immediately than the other. It will be said, all this is figurative ; and that it alludes to the temple service, and to the forms of the Jewish ritual, and, therefore, little is to be deduced from it. The conclusion by no means follows, for, though figurative, it marks a difference between some and others, and shews that a higher degree of honour and dignity is placed upon the one set of priests, than upon the other. Chap. xlii. also reveals a difference of this kind, in terms still more marked, "The Levites that are gone away far from me, when Israel went astray, which went astray

from me after their idols ; they shall even bear their iniquity—yet they shall be ministers in my sanctuary, having charge at the gates of the house, and ministering to the house ; they shall not come unto me, to do the office of the priest unto me, nor come near to any of my holy things, in the most holy place : but they shall bear their shame and their abominations which they have committed. But I will make them keepers of the charge of the house, for all the service thereof, and for all that shall be done therein. But the priests, the Levites, the sons of Zadok, that kept the charge of my sanctuary, when the children of Israel went astray from me, they shall come near to me to minister unto me ; they shall enter into my sanctuary, and they shall come near to my table to minister unto me, and they shall keep my charge.” Two distinct services are here appointed, unto the more exalted and honourable of which, they of the Lord’s people, who in former times have departed from him, are by no means to be admitted. It is difficult to give an explanation to these passages which shall not lead to the inference, that in Messiah’s reign there will be rewards amongst the Lord’s people, according to the things done in the flesh.

The marked difference between the ministers of the sanctuary and the ministers of the house, will be found

again in chapter xlv. which appoints to them their portions of land. A holy portion of the land is to be offered as an oblation to the Lord. This "holy portion shall be for the priests, the ministers of the sanctuary, which shall come near to minister unto the Lord, and it shall be a place for their houses, and a holy place for the sanctuary:" another different portion is appointed for the Levites, the ministers of the house; and the possession of the city, according to the appointed measure, "shall be for the whole house of Israel." Here a third party is introduced, whose portion is less distinguished. And, again, in the appointment of the ordinances, the people of the land are mentioned. "They shall worship at the door of this gate (the Prince's gate) before the Lord, in the sabbaths, and in the new moons." These seem to be placed below the house of Israel. In chap. xlvii. speaking of the manner of dividing the land, it is said, "ye shall divide it by lot for an inheritance unto you, and to the strangers that sojourn among you, which shall beget children among you, and they shall be among you, as born in the country among the children of Israel; they shall have inheritance with you according to the tribes of Israel." If this passage stood alone, it might be too much to assert, that the birth of children in the flesh was *certainly* there intended; but agreeing, as it does, with so many other

Scriptures, which plainly declare the continuance of mankind in the flesh at this time ; such a meaning is hardly to be denied to it. It is worthy of remark, that in allotting the portions of the several tribes, in chapter *xlvi*, Dan's portion is mentioned first, although in *Rev. vii.* the children of Dan do not appear to be sealed : it is difficult to suggest what may be meant under this symbol.

But whatever shall hereafter be shewn to us of the glories of these future ages, Messiah, the Father, the Maker, the Husband, and the beloved one of his Church, will be, as he now is, the source of every blessing. He will be in the midst of his people. In his presence will be fulness of joy, and at his right hand, pleasures for evermore. "Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb." The cares, the fears, the sorrows, and the troubles of these present evil times will then be as yesterday, when it is past, and as a watch in the night. And we shall be made glad, according to the days in which he hath afflicted us, and the years wherein we have seen evil. "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have a right to the tree of life, and enter in through the gates into the city." The angel of the Lord testifies of these things in the Churches, and still in these our days the Spirit and the bride say,

Come. Let him that is athirst come. Whosoever will, let him take of the waters of life freely. The night is far spent, and already the day-dawn is at hand. The Lord cometh with a recompense, and his reward is with him. Surely he cometh quickly. Amen. Even so come, Lord Jesus. Amen.

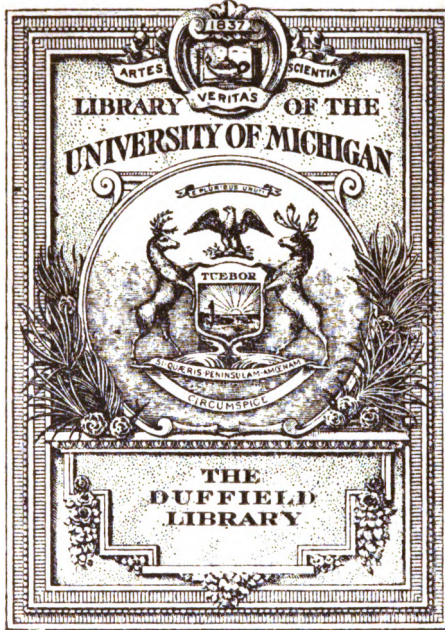
THE END.

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